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ABSTRACT

This manual presents a process for creating public-private sector partnerships on state and regional levels focused on increasing job opportunities for people with disabilities. The manual's four chapters follow the recommended program planning process. The first chapter offers suggestions for building a cadre of consumer, private sector, and public sector coalition partners. Chapter 2 discusses conducting an environmental assessment identifying the deficiencies in the number and type of job opportunities for specific consumer groups, current and future personnel needs of private sector businesses, the public sector's capacity to meet employment needs, and entrepreneurial aspirations of consumers. Chapter 3 focuses on development of the strategic plan in response to the environmental assessment, including a statement of vision, mission, and plan unique to the state or region and addressing consumer aspirations, private sector needs, and public sector mission. In Chapter 4 the design and operation of business and corporate initiatives are addressed, including the design of an effective business, state, or regional initiative. (Contains 14 references.) (DB)

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Virginia Commonwealth University Technical Assistance Center &
Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Supported Employment

Increasing Employment Opportunities for Individuals with Disabilities Through Economic Development:

Creating Business and Corporate Initiatives

ED 373 524

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Dale Verstegen
John Nietupski

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Increasing Employment Opportunities for Individuals with Disabilities Through Economic Development:

Creating Business and Corporate Initiatives

© March, 1994
Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Supported Employment
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Preface

The development of the concept of employment with supports has had a significant impact on the lives of people with severe disabilities. The demand for employment can be heard around the nation. However, limited, if any, economic development resources have been specifically targeted to people with disabilities. This guide was developed to help meet this challenge by presenting strategies for developing corporate or business development initiatives. The manual offers the reader a process for creating public-private sector partnerships focused on increasing job opportunities for people with disabilities. It describes strategies various states have used, possibilities to consider, and suggestions for creating initiatives in your locality.

The Problem: Why Action is Needed

- Fewer adults with disabilities are participating in the labor force
- Agencies face declining federal, state, and local resources
- Restricted range of occupations available to individuals with disabilities
- Minimal opportunity for career advancement for individuals with disabilities
- Few people with disabilities have opportunities to demonstrate entrepreneurial talents
- Limited economic development resources targeted to people with disabilities
- Individuals with disabilities are viewed in terms of their disability rather than their potential contribution to society
- Access to larger business and union jobs is an ongoing challenge

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What does the public sector have to offer the private sector?

- Viable solutions to private sector labor problems and shortages.
- Needed goods and services through establishing viable businesses operated by non-traditional entrepreneurs.

What does the private sector have to offer to the public sector?

- Job opportunities, knowledge, and expertise that enable providers to improve their services.
- Market opportunities, knowledge, and expertise that enable providers and individuals with disabilities to become more self-sufficient.

A Solution: What Action is Needed?

- A private-public sector partnership is needed to increase job opportunities for people with disabilities and allow access to the economic mainstream.
- The partnership should focus on developing jobs in existing businesses and creating jobs through business start-up and expansion.

Who can build a public-private sector partnership?

- State supported employment systems change grant directors
- Universities/university affiliated programs
- State vocational rehabilitation agency directors and managers
- Supported employment agency directors
- Mental health/mental retardation/developmental disabilities agency personnel
- Developmental Disabilities Council directors/members
- State/regional economic development entities
- Self advocates (Persons with disabilities/advocacy organizations)
- Private and Public sector leaders

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What does the public-private sector partnership include?

A **Business Development Initiative** is an organized regional or state effort to create new jobs through the start-up/expansion of integrated businesses operated by entrepreneurs with disabilities, rehabilitation agencies, or local businesses.

A business development initiative can...

1. Create jobs for people with disabilities and the community at large.
2. Generate revenue to offset declining human service dollars.
3. Promote flexible, responsive businesses that are willing to carve jobs to accommodate people with severe disabilities.
4. Enhance natural support possibilities.
5. Facilitate the acquisition of business skills by entrepreneurs with disabilities.

A **Corporate Initiative** is an organized regional or state effort to interest businesses in hiring supported employees. Marketing efforts target large firms, trade associations, union businesses, and public sector employers.

A corporate initiative can..

1. Provide access to a broader range of occupational choices.
2. Facilitate access to larger corporations which have career opportunities.
3. Link local agencies with potential employers.
4. Increase recognition and acceptance of individuals with disabilities within the business community.
5. Promote understanding of personnel needs in given industries.
6. Refine agency job development skills.

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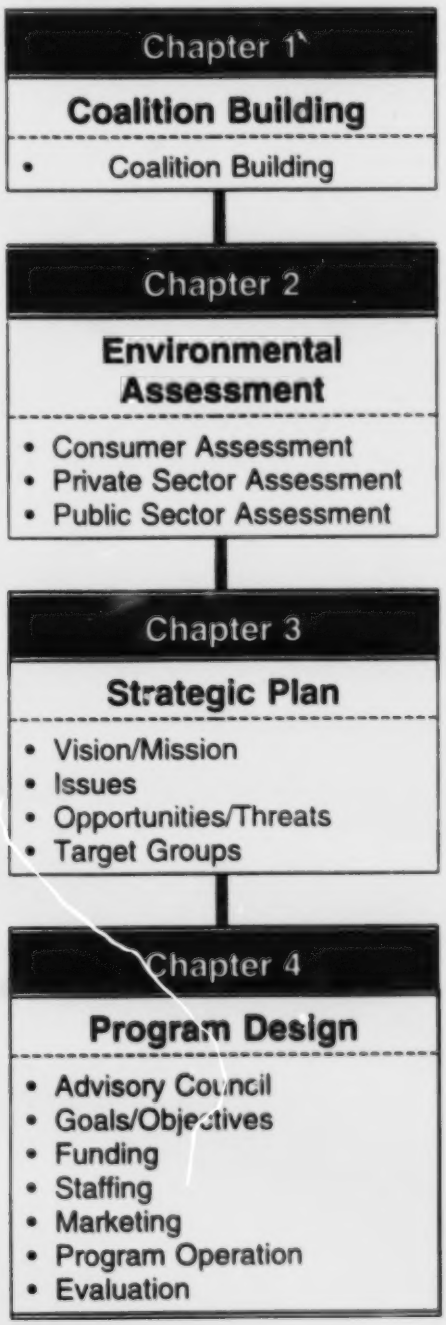
What is the Economic Development Planning Process?



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Jobs and economic development are essential for the continued prosperity of the citizens of our nation. People with disabilities want to be included in the mainstream of economic development. The challenge to the reader is to examine this material and use it as a guide to initiating a coalition of stakeholders interested in developing economic development initiatives within the community. We hope that this guide facilitates growth in economic development initiatives by stimulating creative thinking and collaborative activity.

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Introduction

The demand for jobs can be heard throughout the country. Previously unpopular causes such as legalized gambling now enjoy growing support because of the magic words, **"jobs" and "economic development**." State and federal elections can be won or lost on the basis of who is perceived as better able to create new jobs.

The state-federal rehabilitation program and supported employment are two efforts that have attempted to increase job opportunities for people with disabilities (Nietupski, Verstegen, Kidder, & Webster, 1986). Despite these efforts, problems continue to exist. The 1990 census reports that fewer adults with disabilities are participating in the labor market, as compared to earlier census reports (Bowe, 1993; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1992). In 1990, more adults with disabilities considered themselves prevented from working by their disabilities than in 1970 (Bowe, 1993). Declining federal, state, and local resources threaten the progress achieved through innovative efforts such as supported employment.

People with disabilities have participated in the "jobs" and "economic development" push. This disenfranchised group has viewed employment as a critical step toward achieving the "American Dream". Today, there are still too many people who do not believe that individuals with disabilities (consumers) can make contributions to society (Heumann, 1993). Limited, if any, economic development resources have been specifically targeted to people with disabilities (Goodall, Versetgen, & Nietupski, 1988). Typically these efforts for consumers have focused on developing subcontracts for rehabilitation facility-based, sheltered

employment operations. Few people with disabilities have had the opportunity to show their entrepreneurial talents and become business owners and employers. Consumers employed in the community tend to work in a restricted range of occupations that have offered minimal opportunities for career advancement. Individuals with disabilities are viewed in terms of their disability rather than their qualifications (Brooke, Barcus, & Inge, 1992; Heumann, 1993).

What can be done to address these problems? Clearly, human service professionals and consumer groups must have stronger partnerships with the private sector (Nietupski, Verstegen, Hamre-Nietupski, 1993). Two ways in which those partnerships can be achieved are a **Corporate or Business Development Initiative**. The goal of a corporate initiative is to develop jobs within existing businesses through regional or statewide marketing efforts (Goodall et. al., 1988). The goal of a business development initiative is to create jobs on a regional or statewide basis through the start-up or expansion of business ventures that have integrated workforces (Goodall et. al., 1988).

These two strategies offer the real possibility for long term economic impact for people with disabilities. This is so because human service agencies, the consumers that they serve, and community businesses all bring something to the table through corporate and business development programs. Human service providers and consumers offer viable solutions to labor problems (e.g., reducing turnover, relieving shortages, improving reliability) and offer needed goods and services to the community through establishing viable business ventures. Businesses offer job opportunities, knowledge, and expertise that enable providers to improve the quality and efficiency of their services. Because corporate and business development initiatives offer such promise, they are the focus of this publication.

Definition & Benefits of A Business Development Initiative

A business development initiative refers to an organized, state or regional effort to create new jobs through either the start-up of integrated businesses by entrepreneurs with disabilities or rehabilitation agencies or the expansion and integration of existing businesses (Goodall et. al., 1988). This initiative offers technical assistance to enable entrepreneurs and/or rehabilitation agencies to study the feasibility of a business idea; develop a business plan; obtain financing for the venture; and successfully operate the business. Some of the **benefits** of a Business Development Initiative are described in Table 1 below.

Benefits of a Business Development Initiative

A business development initiative can....

1. Create jobs for people with disabilities and the community at large (e.g. eight businesses and 46 jobs/year per $100,000 budget in Wisconsin).
2. Generate revenue to offset declining human service dollars (e.g. $500,000 in unencumbered revenue, per annum by Wisconsin agencies).
3. Promote flexible, responsive businesses that are willing to carve jobs to accommodate people with severe disabilities (agency operated Dairy Queen with jobs carved for supported employees).
4. Enhance natural support possibilities.
5. Facilitate the acquisition of business skills by agencies/entrepreneurs with disabilities.

adapted from: Goodall, Verstegen, & Nietupski, 1988

Table 1: Benefits of a Business Development Initiative

Definition & Benefits of a Corporate Initiative

A corporate initiative refers to an organized, state or regional effort to interest

businesses in hiring people with disabilities through supported employment (Goodall et. al., 1988; Nietupski, 1992). It involves the development of jobs in existing businesses by either filling existing position vacancies and/or creating/carving new positions through duty reallocation. It also involves marketing efforts to target large firms, firms with statewide/regional affiliates, trade associations with statewide memberships, union businesses, and/or public sector employers. Finally, interested businesses are linked with capable, local service providers. Essentially, a corporate initiative is a "top-down" marketing strategy designed to obtain the corporate decision maker's (industry leader's) endorsement of supported employment (Nietupski, 1992). These decision makers then encourage their affiliates and members to examine their personnel needs, in concert with local agencies, to see if supported employment is feasible. Some of the **benefits** of a corporate initiative are described in table 2 on the next page.

Purpose of this Publication

The purpose of this publication is to assist the reader in developing state or regional business or corporate initiatives. The target audience are the innovators within the consumer population and organizations, the public sector, and the private sector. Specifically, this manual is targeted to those who see the benefits of these initiatives and are willing and able to build a coalition to make them happen.

A wide range of people might be in a position to use this publication including state vocational rehabilitation agency directors, supported employment managers, facility specialists, placement/marketing specialists, state mental health/mental retardation/developmental disabilities personnel, developmental disabilities council members, independent living centers, or other consumer/advocacy groups, state/regional economic

Benefits of a Corporate Initiative

A corporate initiative can....

1. Provide access to a broader range of occupational choices (e.g. banks, credit unions, hospitals, retailers, manufacturers).

2. Facilitate access to larger corporations (e.g. JC Penney, Sears, Wal*Mart, Target).

3. Link local agencies with potential employers (e.g. over 80 job leads/year per full time equivalent (FTE) turned over to local agencies in Wisconson).

4. Increase recognition and acceptance of individuals with disabilities within the business community (e.g. Wisconsin Governor's Award cermony for businesses in supported employment).

5. Promote understanding of personnel needs in given industries.

6. Refine agency job development skills (e.g. job development process training, job duty lists, & marketing materials/training).

from: Nietupski, 1992

Table 2: Benefits of a Corporate Initiative

development entities, universities/university affiliated programs, service providers or their associations, private sector business leaders, and state supported employment systems change grant directors.

Organizational Overview

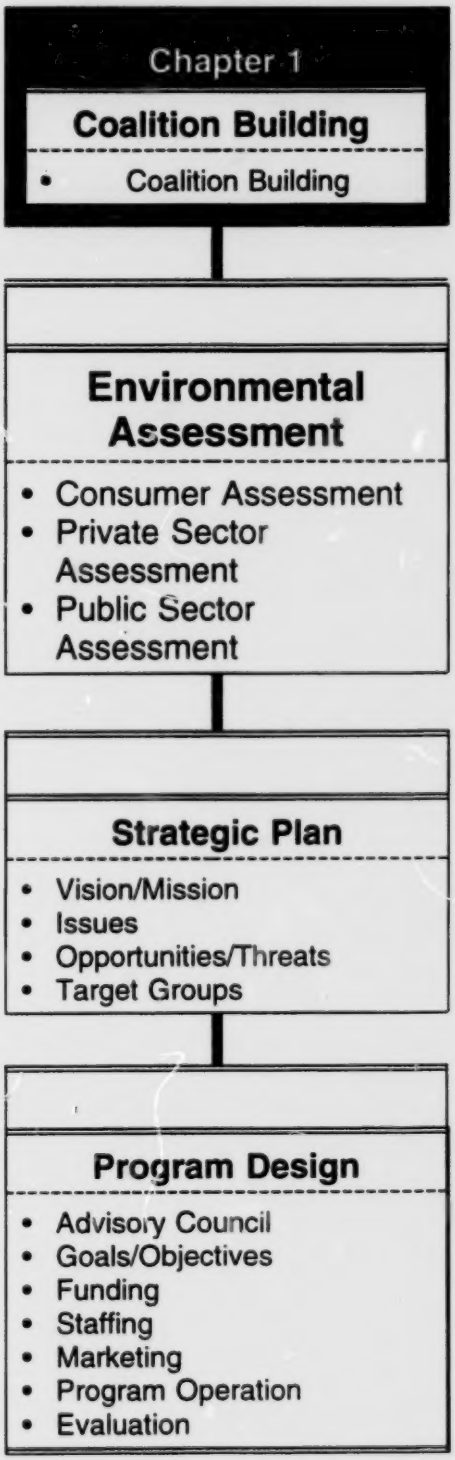
The four chapters of this publication follow a program planning process that the authors recommend for the establishment of these initiatives. This process offers the reader a framework for building a coalition and establishing business and corporate initiatives. **In Chapter 1**, the reader is led through a process for building a cadre of consumer, private sector, and public sector coalition partners. **Chapter 2** discusses conducting an environmental assessment. This assessment allows each state to identify the deficiencies in the number and

type of job opportunities for specific consumer groups, current and future personnel needs of private sector businesses, public sector's capacity to meet the employment needs, and entrepreneurial aspirations of consumers.

In Chapter 3, the coalition of stakeholders develops a strategic plan. The strategic plan is a proactive response to the environmental assessment. Strategic planning enables stakeholders to collectively develop a vision, mission, and plan unique to their state. This plan addresses consumer aspirations, private sector needs, and public sector mission.

In Chapter 4, the reader is given a set of considerations for designing the operation of business and corporate initiatives. Chapter four delineates strategies for designing an effective business development initiative or a statewide or regional corporate initiative. It offers a series of activities or steps to consider. These considerations are drawn from the experience of states that have developed similar programs.

Chapter 1: Coalition Building



Coalition Building

Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Iowa, and Oklahoma have established business development or corporate initiative programs. In each state or region, a strong coalition was responsible for turning an interesting concept into a viable, working program. A coalition is a collaborative effort across a number of consumers, private and public sector entities, or stakeholders who have specific needs and interests that might be addressed through regional or statewide business or job development.

An assessment of the environment within a given state or region offers a process through which a coalition might be built. Essentially, an environmental assessment lets stakeholders learn whether there are common needs or interests among coalition members. If the outcome of this process is the identification of common needs, the development of a strategic plan to establish regional or statewide business and/or corporate initiatives is justified.

This chapter discusses the purpose and key considerations for building a coalition and describes a proposed action plan for building a coalition. In Chapter 2, a general process for conducting an environmental needs assessment with coalition members is provided.

Coalition Building Purpose, Potential Partners, and Considerations

A strong coalition of key stakeholders can make regional or statewide business

development or corporate initiative programs a reality. The coalition building process actually begins when someone understands the potential of a new program initiative and determines that a business or corporate initiative in a state or region is important for people with disabilities and the agencies which serve them. This person becomes a catalyst for building a coalition.

The people who form this coalition, the size of the coalition, the rate at which the coalition expands, and the manner in which the coalition establishes a program will vary from state to state. Typically, the energy, drive, and determination to establish a program starts with a core group of "champions" (Brown, personal communication, 1993). These are individuals who see the value of such an effort and are willing to build coalitions to establish a program initiative. The purpose of such a coalition is to form a strong, influential driving force that will conduct an environmental assessment, develop a strategic plan, design and direct the program, and evaluate the outcomes and benefits.

In Wisconsin, the core group of champions started with a single state Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) administrator (Kidder, personal communication, 1993). It then expanded to include a staff member of an economic development agency with strong corporate connections and a state department of human services staff member with a strong commitment to supported employment. You, the reader, might be the initial champion in your state or region. The task before you is to build your core coalition to help make a regional or statewide program a reality.

Potential Coalition Partners

Coalition partners are comprised of consumers, consumer organizations, and representatives from the private and public sectors (U.S. Economic Development Administration, undated). Identifying specific partners from these three groups is the challenge that must be undertaken to establish a corporate initiative or business development

program in a state or region. The following table lists potential coalition partners. This listing is followed by a brief explanation of possible roles which stakeholders in these groups can play in building a coalition.

Potential Coalition Partners

A. Consumers/Consumer Organizations

- successful business people with disabilities
- consumers seeking business ownership/community jobs
- consumer advocacy organizations

B. Private Sector

- foundations
- finance and banking organizations
- business association leaders
- utility companies
- business leaders
- minority leaders
- union leaders

C. Public Sector

- Developmental Disabilities Councils
- State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies
- Universities
- State Economic Development Agencies
- Other Economic Development Organizations
- State Association of Rehabilitation Agencies/Facilities
- Local Rehabilitation Agency executive directors
- Private Industry Councils (PIC's) and Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) service providers
- Mental Retardation/Mental Health (MR/MH) State Agencies
- Governor's Office and Committee(s) on Disabilities
- State Legislators
- State Lobby Organizations

Table 1: Potential Coalition Partners

A. Consumers/Consumer Organizations

Consumers or consumer organizations whose major priority is employment can make strong coalition partners. These individuals can demonstrate the potential success of business and corporate initiative programs through their life experiences as business operators or as employees in high profile, nontraditional companies and jobs. Specifically, **business people with disabilities** who have been successful in the business community are role models who demonstrate the feasibility of a business development program by example. They also know how difficult the barriers can be and may want to make it easier for others with a disability. **Consumers** who have a personal interest in business development, self-employment, and entrepreneurship are the next strongest coalition partners or program advocates. They demonstrate entrepreneurial spirit and potential program outcomes. Consumers also can demonstrate the level of demand or need for these initiatives and the lack of access to employment opportunities to date.

Advocacy Organizations such as United Cerebral Palsy (UCP), Associations for Retarded Citizens (ARC), Centers for Independent Living (CIL), Association for Persons with Mental Illness, Brain Trauma Association, The Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps (TASH), The Association for Persons in Supported Employment (APSE), and other consumer advocacy organizations interested in consumer empowerment can be good coalition partners. A consumer organization which provides resources to develop entrepreneurs with disabilities and create customized jobs for people with severe disabilities will make a strong coalition member.

B. Private Sector

Private sector coalition partners can add credibility, networking opportunities, and possibly funding to business or corporate initiatives. **Business leaders** have a vested interest in stimulating local economies, creating jobs, and reducing the need for taxpayer support.

The private sector is increasingly concerned about the size and quality of the available labor pool. Private sources of financing recognize that many potentially worthwhile projects never come to fruition because of underdeveloped business plans. Many private sector business leaders find it refreshing to be part of a coalition that addresses these private sector concerns while also achieving the goals of consumers and public service agencies.

Foundations have a mission which is socially conscious to the needs of special interest groups such as people with disabilities, the chronically unemployed, etc., and/or specific communities (Lefferts, 1992). Foundations are always looking for outcome oriented innovative programming with demonstrable impact that are outcome oriented. Foundations have flexible funding potential and prefer to leverage other sources of funding. Foundation staff can strengthen the coalition and assist in program design. With small amounts of flexible funding, they can leverage larger amounts of public funding (e.g. federal vocational rehabilitation dollars).

Finance and Banking Organizations are always looking for resources in market research, business planning, and financial packaging. One of their biggest problems is having to make loan/credit decisions based on inadequate information. Bank staff can strengthen the coalition, assist in program design, and indicate that they would be interested in providing additional sources of financing if the program produces solid business plans.

Business Association Leaders such as the State Association of Manufacturing and Commerce, Chambers of Commerce, or other Trade Associations can support the viability of an economic development program. These leaders are devoted to the enhancement and well being of the community through economic development and expansion. They bring a wealth of experiences, knowledge, and business connections regarding business and economic development that will be invaluable to the coalition.

Utility Companies often are involved in many community activities and are

well-connected both in the public and private sectors. They have a stake in the community and may be interested in innovative programming, since some companies have available flexible funds to support targeted economic development and/or community projects. Each utility company has a key person assigned to economic development.

Business Leaders typically have a genuine concern for the community and an investment in its future. A few key leaders can provide the image, credibility, contacts, and leadership needed to demonstrate the viability of a new program initiative. Some businesses can also provide market opportunities, supplies, raw materials, technical assistance, and credit terms that would "incubate" new business ventures which could be owned by people with disabilities.

Minority Leaders have historically been under-utilized in the private sector. Involving key minority leaders can present an opportunity to learn from their leadership and experiences, as well as strengthen the coalition. There are also opportunities to partner with minority organizations to increase the availability of business development resources for all under-utilized (disadvantaged) populations.

C. Public Sector

Potential public sector coalition partners fall into two subgroups. The first group is made up of individuals devoted to enhancing vocational and other life outcomes for people with disabilities, and the second includes those who strive to stimulate the economy and create jobs. Some entities, such as Private Industry Councils, legislators, and the governor's office fall into both categories. The public sector organizations that make strong coalition partners are those that see the coalition as a means to leverage resources that would not otherwise be available to meet their needs. Because public sector agencies can be large and bureaucratic, an ideal public sector coalition representative is one who is able to secure the agency's involvement in the program initiative.

A **Developmental Disabilities Council** promotes independence, productivity, integration, and inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in the community. These councils have discretionary funds to support specific priorities which the council sets each year to achieve their mission. Council directors can be key players in all aspects of program development. The council director could be well informed to assist in the environmental assessment, strategic planning, and program design. The council may or may not be able to assist in the initial program funding and design. However, the director knows what the priorities of the council are as it relates to the needs of people with developmental disabilities on a long term basis. Therefore, the director can be a valuable early coalition partner in determining whether a statewide or regional business development program or a corporate initiative program is timely, as well as how best to design the program.

A **State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (VR)** provides a full range of services such as vocational training, maintenance, transportation, and physical restoration to persons with physical and mental disabilities. The goal of the agency is the provision of services which lead to suitable employment and economic independence. Business development is, by law, one viable employment outcome for any vocational rehabilitation client. A VR administrator or influential staff member should be included in the early stages of building a coalition.

The small business development option for VR clients will always be more risky; however, risk is inherent to the definition of entrepreneurship. A well designed business development program should be able to provide enough specialized staffing and resources so that clients who desire to start businesses receive the necessary counseling and support. The statewide business development program should provide adequate resources to VR counselors to ensure that the small business development option is no more costly or labor intensive than other vocational rehabilitation options. A business development program should produce as

efficient a closure rate as other vocational options.

Most states are not able to provide sufficient funds to match all the federal Title I dollars to which they are entitled. If a small portion of non-federal funding can be obtained, a larger portion of federal Title I dollars may be available for business development resources for people with disabilities. This represents funding which would otherwise not be available for potential entrepreneurs with disabilities. Systems Change Title III and Supported Employment Title VI-C funding could also be utilized for program support.

University Affiliated Programs (UAP), Research and Training Centers, Business Extension Programs, Business Schools, and Small Business Development Centers have staff members who could be excellent early coalition partners. University faculty or staff also can be excellent early coalition partners. They could provide invaluable input in all aspects of program development to include environmental assessment, strategic planning, and program design. These key players can provide sound technical assistance, access funding through grant writing, as well as complete program evaluation. A university may also be able to provide the site for administering the new program initiative.

The **State Economic Development Agency's (ED)** mission is to positively affect local economies and jobs throughout the state. This mission should be all-inclusive for people with disabilities. Targeted economic development resources exist in most states for special interest or disadvantaged population groups. Historically, federal and state economic development resources have been legislated for minorities, sometimes for women entrepreneurs and low income groups, and rarely for people with disabilities. Since the Supreme Court Croson decision, it is becoming more difficult to target economic development resources specifically for racially ethnic groups. Most states are considering utilizing a more general "disadvantaged" eligibility criteria for these targeted resources. This shift to a

"disadvantaged" eligibility criteria creates an opportunity for states and regions to include people with disabilities as a targeted group.

An **economic development administrator or influential staff member** could be included as a partner in building a coalition. Given the highly political nature of economic development, it is important that a strong coalition base of support is evident when an economic development agency is approached. As with the VR agency, very few of the ED agency's middle management and line staff are able to affect statewide or demonstration project funding for a new program initiative. However, well connected economic development administrators can generate discretionary program "seed" or match money for a new targeted business development program. As coalition partners, ED agency staff can also be of assistance in program design and demonstrating program viability. The ED agency may also be an appropriate site for administering the new business development program.

Some states have **other economic development organizations** that are more targeted, less bureaucratic, and more flexible than the state economic development organization. Administrators and staff from these agencies can sometimes be more innovative, entrepreneurial, and have more of a consistent organizational mission than the state economic agency. However, these organizations may not offer the same "political clout," program credibility, and security of the state ED agency. Depending on the availability of other ED organizations, the core coalition group may want to approach several ED agencies and gauge the level of interest and capability in developing the targeted business development initiative.

State Associations of Rehabilitation Agencies/Facilities have varying levels of staff, programming, and political clout. Many of these associations have an interest in developing additional resources so that agencies are less dependent on grants and government funding.

Many are also interested in assisting agencies in developing more and better job opportunities for people with severe disabilities. The association director can be a strong coalition partner who can assist in program design and lobbying for business development resources for member agencies.

Rehabilitation Program Executive Directors who are progressive, influential, and interested in business development, entrepreneurship, and integrated job opportunities for consumers can be strong coalition partners. Certain agency directors can assist in all aspects of the coalition building process. These directors can demonstrate program viability, generate program match funds, and create a grassroots lobby effort for program funding.

Private Industry Councils (PIC's) and Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) Agencies obtain federal funding to provide job training to low income and displaced workers. People with disabilities are specifically identified as potential recipients of these funds. Councils across the country vary quite a bit on the amount of funding which benefits people with disabilities each year. **PIC Council** and **JTPA staff** may be effective coalition partners. Their participation in the coalition depends on their level of interest in supporting and, perhaps, funding business development resources for entrepreneurs with disabilities and rehabilitation agencies who could create job and training opportunities for people with disabilities. Some JTPA service providers operate business development programs and may be an appropriate site to administer a business development program for people with disabilities.

Mental Retardation (MR) /Mental Health (MH)/ Developmental Disabilities (DD) Agency(ies) may be a strong coalition partner in creating statewide or regional employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Agency administrators and staff can assist in

strategic planning and program design. In some states, this agency can provide establishment grants and other sources of specialized funding, depending on the specific target groups which the new business development program will serve.

Governor's Office and Committee(s) on Disabilities, depending on current issues and agendas of the Governor's office and Committees, may be strong coalition partners. If these political entities are interested in a new program initiative that promotes public/private sector partnership, members of the Governor's office and Committees can assist in strategic planning, program design, and strengthening the coalition building process. These entities can generate political support and identify state resources which would otherwise be unavailable. This type of innovative programming can provide these political entities with positive press and further their political agenda regardless of party lines.

State Legislators who are aware of, and advocate for disability issues or targeted economic development programming, might join your coalition. When states are struggling to balance budgets and existing programs must be cut, it is difficult to obtain support for new program initiatives. However, legislative input and support can be valuable even if state funding is not being accessed. State legislators can be very influential in securing the cooperation and support of state agency administrators for utilizing existing federal and state resources within agencies such as VR, ED, and MR/MH. By involving legislators in the coalition and demonstrating program outcomes, they can justify and support the use of on-going state revenue for this type of programming. Just as the Governor's office and Committees can benefit, state legislators can generate positive press and further their political agenda, regardless of political party, based on the results of this innovative programming.

State Lobby Organizations can be strong coalition partners by assisting in securing the interests of state legislators and the Governor's office, since their mission is to affect the legislative process. It is important to identify and approach lobby organizations with an

interest and mission consistent with a business development program for people with disabilities.

Considerations in Selecting Coalition Partners

What should you look for in a potential coalition partner? When do you start this process? Does the coalition building process ever end? How do you keep your coalition working together? Answers to these questions are offered below. The recommendations are based on the experiences and input of the authors and editorial collaborators, and available literature (U.S. Economic Administration, undated).

Characteristics of Coalition Partners

A key player will only be a coalition partner if the business or corporate initiative is consistent with the mission of their organization, and the potential program outcomes help to meet certain needs or solve specific problems identified through the environmental assessment. Therefore, when considering potential coalition members, identify consumers, private sector, and public sector representatives whose needs can be met through a business or corporate initiative. In addition to identifying collaborators with common needs, consider the personal characteristics and work ethic of potential collaborators. Specifically, you might focus on those people who are innovators and risk takers; are not afraid of failure; command respect and trust; have influence with particular constituencies, agencies or business/community groups; and are willing to work hard to establish a program.

Essentially, at the initial coalition building stage, "champions" who have the commitment, drive, and contacts to develop an initiative should be sought. Initial partners must be willing to invest the time and energy necessary to make a viable program. These individuals are the core members that will be involved as program advisory committee members once an initiative is established.

Stakeholder Involvement

Many of the best potential collaborators are people who lead extremely busy lives.

How are people who are already involved in a number of initiatives drawn to the coalition? How can they be involved and tied in to the coalition's mission? Table 2 below lists several things that might be considered to achieve these outcomes. These general strategies can help establish and maintain an active, involved coalition.

Obtaining and Maintaining Stakeholder Involvement

1. **Be clear** on what needs to be done.
2. **Describe how** the potential initiative is consistent with the mission of the person's organization and will benefit his/her constituency.
3. **Focus** recruitment efforts on future benefits, not the current barriers or problems.
4. **Start small and build slowly**. Try not to do too much so quickly that frustration sets in. Remember, this is a long term project.
5. **Economize collaborator time** (e.g., lunch/breakfast meetings; work on initiative when meeting on other agenda items; keep meetings short; have assignments following each meeting; review progress before moving ahead).
6. **Maintain communication** throughout the planning process to keep stakeholders apprised of progress and future activities.
7. **Demonstrate outcomes** achieved.
8. **Celebrate successes**!

Brown, personal communication, 1993

Table 2: Obtaining and Maintaining Stakeholder Involvement

Building the Coalition

The coalition building process begins once a preliminary idea of a state's or region's needs has been formulated, and an outline for a corporate or business development initiative has been developed. This is a tricky proposition, because it is necessary to build a sufficient

case to generate interest in order to "draw" people to the cause. However, these individuals need to feel like they are starting on the ground floor of the initiative.

Coalition building continues throughout the program planning process. New coalition members are added as initial members recommend other participants. The group also can identify other energetic people during the environmental assessment, strategic planning, program design, and implementation processes.

Business Development Example.

Wisconsin's Business Development Initiative Coalition Members

Consumer/Consumer Organizations

- VR client-entrepreneur with disabilities (core coalition member)
- Wisconsin Coalition for Advocacy (state agency)

Private Sector

- Wisconsin Capital Corp. (a capital investment entity)
- Wisconsin Economic Development Association

Public Sector

- Program manager within Wisconsin Division of VR (core coalition member)
- DD Council Director (core coalition member)
- Wisconsin Dept. of Development
- Minority Bureau Director (core member)
- Legislative Relations Director
- Quasi-Governmental Economic Development Agency Manager (core member)
- State Assn. of Rehabilitation Agencies Director
- Several Rehabilitation Agency Directors
- MH/MR/DD/ State Agency Program Manager (core member)
- State Legislators
- Democratic Assembly person (core member)
- Republican Assembly person (core member)

Table 3: BDI Coalition Members

The Wisconsin Business Development Initiative (BDI) program is a statewide business development initiative targeted to people with disabilities. The BDI coalition includes the members listed in Table 3. Started in 1986 through state vocational rehabilitation dollars, BDI used its first three years of demonstration funding to establish integrated business ventures; further develop its coalition; and simultaneously gather the consumer, private sector, and public sector information and support to establish a permanent, state funded program. The state allocation recently leveraged additional federal VR dollars to expand the program.

Corporate Initiative Example.

Employment Resources, Inc. (ERI) Coalition Members

Consumer/Consumer Organization Coalition Members

- Wisconsin Coalition for Advocacy
- Association for the Mentally Ill
- Wisconsin Brain Trauma Association

Private Sector Coalition Members

- Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce Director (core member)
- Wisconsin Credit Union League Board President (core member)
- Wisconsin Restaurant Association Director (core member)

Public Sector Coalition Members

- Quasi-Governmental Economic Development Agency Director (core member)
- State legislator - Republican Assembly person (core member)
- Dept. of Health & Social Services Deputy Secretary (core member)
- Division of Community Services SE Specialist (core member)
- VR Program Manager (core member)

from: Kidder, Personal Communication, 1993

Table 4: ERI Coalition Members

Employment Resources, Inc. (ERI) operates a statewide corporate initiative program in Wisconsin ((Kidder, personal communication, 1993). Employment Resources coordinates statewide efforts to expand local supported employment agencies' job development capacity. The coalition members that have shaped ERI's corporate initiative are presented in Table 4 on the previous page.

Proposed Action Plan for Building a Coalition

The following steps are offered as a means by which the reader can develop a coalition and conduct an environmental assessment.

Step 1: Review the introduction of this guide. On the basis of this information, make a personal determination whether a business and or corporate initiative program is needed for people with disabilities in your state or region. If you determine that this type of initiative is needed, proceed to Step 2.

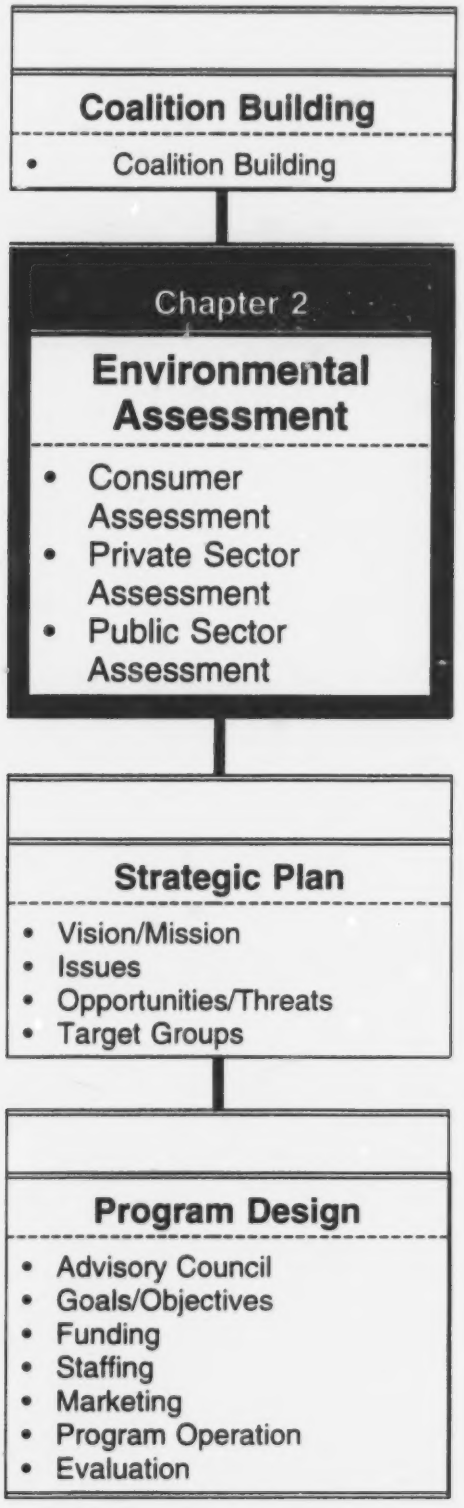
Step 2: Review the list of potential coalition partners presented in Part I of this chapter. Identify a core group of "champions" who might support the initiative that you deem needed. If possible, select representatives from each of the three groups (consumers, private, and public sectors). If you cannot immediately identify specific representatives who meet the criteria of having widespread respect, being trustworthy, and willing to work, consider adding to your coalition as current members share their contacts.

Step 3: Share this guide, or the parts that seem applicable initially, with your core group. Start slowly so as not to force their involvement. If the ideas presented generate interest, you might draw their attention to the specific assessment factors impacting your state/region (Chapter 2), strategic planning issues you might need to address (Chapter 3) and the outcomes/benefits important to your state or region highlighting the material we have included. Let your potential collaborators know that you are interested in their impressions

of the concepts presented.

Step 4: Follow up with each person to gauge their reaction and degree of interest. Close your discussion by asking whether they would be interested in meeting to assess the environment for this type of programming.

Chapter 2: Environmental Assessment



Environmental Assessment

How can a coalition begin to determine whether and how regional or statewide business and corporate initiatives should be established? A logical first step in any planning process is to conduct a needs assessment (Vaughan, 1983). This assessment will allow the coalition to gauge the needs and capacity of three key aspects of the state's/region's economic environment: consumers with disabilities, private sector businesses, and public sector agencies. Through this assessment, the needs and capacity to successfully conduct business and corporate initiative programs can be gauged. An assessment of each aspect is described below.

Consumers with Disabilities

Initially, coalition partners should invest time and energy into gathering needs assessment information related to developing an accurate view of the state or regional employment picture for people with disabilities. An assessment of consumers with disabilities consists of analyzing the needs and capacity for assuming jobs within existing businesses (corporate initiative) and for creating jobs through establishing business development ventures (business development). The manner in which a coalition gathers information will vary from region to region, however, the coalition membership should develop a coordinated effort for gathering information/data. Table 1 on the next page is a listing of strategies that Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Iowa, and Oklahoma found to be useful (Brown, personal communication, 1993; Manuelian, 1992).

Information Gathering Strategies

- √ Formal/informal surveys of consumer advocacy groups
- √ Formal/informal surveys of state vocational rehabilitation personnel assisting clients interested in self-employment
- √ Regional or statewide management information systems that track employment
- √ Surveys of rehabilitation agencies regarding permanent placements
- √ Surveys of state economic development agencies for examples of entrepreneurial activity
- √ Focus group interviews with consumers who have disabilities

Table 1: Information Gathering Strategies

Access. One consumer-related environmental factor to consider for assessment is the ease of access to a variety of occupations. The coalition should determine the ease of access to various employment sectors such as manufacturing; service; state/federal government; union-represented; retail; office/clerical; and small, medium, large corporation employment opportunities. Lack of access to the full range of employment sectors unduly restricts career choices. By identifying the business sectors with few (or many) current placements, the coalition can target particular industries or companies for statewide job development efforts.

Interest. Another important assessment factor is the degree of consumer desire for employment. Is there a growing demand for jobs or business ownership among people with disabilities in general or among specific subgroups? The coalition should determine the degree of demand and/or desire for broader occupational choices; career paths; self

employment, entrepreneurship, home-based businesses, or supported employment; and employment among consumer/advocacy groups (e.g., DD Council, Protection & Advocacy, AMI, ARC, Autism Society). Knowing the level of interest and who has such interest tells the coalition: 1.) whether it has sufficient consumer support; 2.) for whom to tailor efforts; and/or 3.) whether strategies to develop consumer interest are required.

Consumer Characteristics. Finally, consumer characteristics will factor into the feasibility and design of statewide or regional economic and corporate initiatives. Certainly, having consumers graduating from special education programs and/or in adult programs with community-based skills is a strength that can and should be capitalized upon (Inge & Wehman, 1993; Moon & Inge, 1993; Banks & Renzaglia, 1993; Nietupski, Murray, Chappell, Strang, Steele, & Egli, 1993; Wehman, Kregel, & Barcus, 1985). Lack of vocational experience might suggest a program design that focuses on entry level occupations where experience is not essential or on short-term employment (e.g., seasonal, transitional employment, or limited hour jobs to build work capacity which can allow for informed career choice making).

Answers to the following questions may provide some insight for program design. Do consumers have community-based work skills to contribute? What is the work history of certain subgroups? Is there a need for flexible job slots for people with more severe disabilities and/or behavioral challenges? What training and experience do consumers have in operating a business?

State/Regional Employment Picture. What examples of entrepreneurial enterprises

by people with disabilities exist in the state or region? What is the extent of entrepreneurial interest among people with disabilities? What services would enable more people with disabilities to establish business ventures? What federal, state, and/or local economic/ political/social/cultural factors impact the need and capacity for business development? Answers to these questions can assist coalition members in determining the level of interest in establishing a business development initiative. The coalition should verify consumer interest in establishing business ventures, identify examples that confirm feasibility, and document consumer-stated needs to increase capability in this area. In addition, the coalition can use the information to locate additional coalition partners for advocating for a business development initiative.

In what industries/businesses are people with severe disabilities currently employed? In what industries/businesses do consumers desire employment but do not find it available? What is the status of the consumers' work experiences that will facilitate employment? Who is advocating for supported employment and how strongly committed are they? What federal/state/local economic/political/social/cultural factors impact the need and capacity for employment? Answers to these questions give a picture of the level of employment or unemployment for people with disabilities in a state or region and determines the amount of interest and support for a regional or statewide corporate initiative program. From this assessment, the coalition may be able to build a case for corporate initiatives and identify additional coalition members to advocate for program establishment.

Private Sector Businesses

An assessment of the private sector consists of analyzing the business factors that

affect your state's or region's ability to develop jobs in existing businesses or create jobs through business development. The coalition might start this process by developing an overall economic profile to indicate the status of the economy in various regions within a state or region. This would include determining the labor and business trends that affect the ability to develop jobs in existing businesses (corporate initiative) or create jobs through a business development initiative. The following table is a listing of information gathering strategies that Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Iowa, and Oklahoma found to be useful. The outcome of this assessment can indicate whether there is sufficient need from the private sector for business or corporate initiative programs. As with the consumer assessment, additional coalition partners might be identified through this process.

Information Gathering Strategies

Strategies can include...

- interviews with business leaders, economic development officials, state employment agencies, chamber of commerce officials, commercial bankers, or editors of newspapers' business section;
- review of state/area economic development or employment reports (e.g., job service labor projections); and
- review of general or industry-specific business publications.

Table 2: Strategies for Assessing the Private Sector

Economic Profile. This information can suggest opportunities and obstacles faced by consumers as well as by private enterprise. For example, an area in economic decline might benefit more from a business/job creation program than a corporate initiative. Similarly, high concentrations of seasonal jobs in tourism might suggest the need for a corporate initiative targeted to the hospitality or recreation industry. The coalition should

determine the area's mix of employment sectors (e.g. manufacturing; service industries; state or federal government offices; retail businesses; office/clerical; and small, medium, large corporation employment opportunities, etc.). Within these employment sectors or service industries, the coalition should identify the strongest employment sectors (e.g., insurance, agricultural products or food processing, publishing, electronics, health care, and so forth). Answers to the questions in Table 3 on the next page should give an economic profile or "big picture" regarding the private sector within a given region or state.

Economic Profile Questions:

1.) What are the growth industries/companies and are the jobs seasonal in certain regions/industries?

2.) What economic development programs exist and which of those target chronically unemployed groups?

3.) Are new products/services being created by larger or smaller businesses? Are more new jobs being created by larger or smaller businesses?

4.) What regions have the greatest or fewest employment opportunities/business development potential?

from: Vaughan, 1983

Table 3: Assessing the Economic Profile of the Private Sector

Labor Trends. Labor trends refer to factors that can increase or decrease private sector willingness to consider supported employment. Some trends, such as labor shortages and turnover/absenteeism, can result in proactive efforts to recruit employees with disabilities (e.g., Pizza Hut's Jobs Plus program, McJobs, Marriott's initiative). Other trends, such as

Employment Assistance Programs (EAPS), can be positive if the concept of natural supports can be successfully linked to a form of employee assistance (Hill & Ruth, 1992; Nisbet, 1992). Increased subcontracting of routine, labor-intensive manual operations (e.g., mailings, subassembly, maintenance) can work against a corporate initiative but might present business venture opportunities for entrepreneurial consumers or agencies. Iowa's corporate initiative addressed the questions in Table 4 on the next page in its environmental assessment.

Questions to Determine Labor Trends

1.) Do certain industries/regions have high employee turnover/ absenteeism?

2.) Do labor shortages in certain industries create demand for alternative labor sources?

3.) Does the labor market demand specialization or cross-training of employees?

4.) Is there a growth in Employee Assistance Programs?

from: Vaughan, 1983; U. S. Department of Labor, 1983

Table 4: Assessing Labor Trends

Business Trends. Business trends also may impact the feasibility of economic development initiatives. Are businesses downsizing? Are mergers and takeovers prevalent in certain industries? Are businesses focussing on cost cutting? What is the availability of technical assistance resources for business planning to secure venture financing? Is entrepreneurship increasing or decreasing? If a business trend toward entrepreneurship exists in a state, acceptance of business venture development for individuals with disabilities may

be more likely. When resources to help entrepreneurs without disabilities in business planning are recognized as essential, the lack of same for consumers suggests the need for a business development initiative.

Downsizing and cost cutting efforts which are prevalent in today's business world can work against supported employment unless cost savings are demonstrated even when new positions are created (e.g., reducing overtime, reducing cost per work unit, paying wages commensurate with job complexity, etc.). Mergers and takeovers often take hiring decisions away from local businesses, and efforts to interest district/corporate offices are much more challenging than when companies are tied to local communities. On the other hand, commitment obtained from the corporate office can expedite job development for a corporate initiative program through a top-down advocacy for supported employment.

Business Attitudes. The attitudes of the business community toward people with disabilities can affect program feasibility. Has the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) increased awareness and anxieties over compliance? Do businesses view workers with disabilities as qualified or unqualified? Are there strong business advocates for supported employment? What are the perceptions of lenders toward entrepreneurs with disabilities or rehabilitation agencies developing business ventures? Concern over ADA can be an impetus for hiring if programs position themselves as a resource to address concerns. Availability of high profile business advocates can be used to leverage broader business participation (Venne, 1990; Nietupski, et. al., 1993). Lending sources who are not aware of the potential of consumers/agencies to establish and successfully operate business ventures need to be educated through specific examples of success.

Business Development. The next set of questions concern private sector needs and capacity as they relate to regional or statewide corporate or business development initiatives.

These questions address the economic, political, social and cultural forces, business trends, and human resource developments that are impacting private sector businesses. Which industries face labor shortages/excesses? In which industries is the need for reliable, long-term employees causing consideration of alternative labor sources? What effects does the ADA and other legislation have on employer willingness to support workers with disabilities? What effects do downsizing, mergers/consolidation, subcontracting, and automation have on job opportunities? What are the trends in regard to self-employment and/or entrepreneurial activity? How do entrepreneurs/small businesses obtain technical assistance and/or financing for business creation/expansion? Is workforce diversity occurring and/or being promoted?

Public Sector Agencies

The needs of public sector agencies also should be assessed. The public sector includes local rehabilitation agencies, state vocational rehabilitation agencies, state/local funding sources, and state economic development agencies. Table 5 and Table 6 are a listing of questions that Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Iowa, and Oklahoma found to be useful (Brown, personal communication, 1993; Manuelian, 1992).

Assessment consists of analyzing the public sector's attitudes toward and experiences with business and or corporate initiatives and the capacity for being involved in such initiatives. The social, economic, political, and or cultural trends that affect the state's/region's ability to develop jobs in existing businesses or create jobs through business development should be identified. The outcome of this assessment can indicate whether there is sufficient need from the public sector perspective for regional or statewide business or corporate initiative programs. As with the consumer and private sector assessment, additional coalition partners can be identified through this process.

Job Placement/Business Venture Development. The extent to which supported

Questions for assessing public sector support for a regional or statewide corporate initiative.

- How widespread is community placement? In what industries?
- In what industries/companies are placements desired but lacking?
- What are the staff capabilities/needs regarding job development in large and small businesses?
- Does the local economy offer many job opportunities?
- How do consumer characteristics affect type of jobs targeted or job development strategies?
- What social/political/economic/cultural factors affect consumer interest in community job placement?

from: Martin-Petty & Henderson, 1991

Table 5: Assessing the Public Sector for a Regional or Statewide Corporate Initiative

employment or business development currently exists in a state or region can influence the perceived feasibility of economic development programs. Questions related to the development of a corporate initiative might include the following. How committed are agencies to integrated versus segregated employment? Where are the typical supported employment placements (traditional service jobs versus nontraditional jobs)? Are placements in small or large businesses or both? Is supported employment present or absent in certain geographic regions? What are the growth trends in supported employment availability?

Questions related to the formation of a business development initiative might include the following. Are there examples of agency/consumer operated business ventures? What is the success rate of consumer/agency operated business ventures? Even if widespread commitment, numerous examples, or placements across the spectrum of businesses do not

A slightly modified set of questions might be addressed regarding a business development initiative. They include:

- Which agencies have established integrated business ventures?
- Which agencies have an interest in establishing business ventures?
- How have requests from consumers to develop entrepreneurial ventures been addressed by state vocational rehabilitation or economic development (ED) agencies?
- What assistance would state VR/ED agencies need/desire to assist entrepreneurial consumers or agencies?
- What economic/political/social/cultural factors affect local/state interest/ability to promote economic development targeted to people with disabilities?

Table 6: Assessing the Public Sector for a Business Development Initiative

exist in a state, programs can be considered feasible if research can identify even a few examples upon which to demonstrate feasibility.

Public Sector Capacity. Capacity can affect feasibility. Do agencies have job development experience with larger or nontraditional businesses? What is staff expertise in job/economic development? How much staff turnover do agencies experience? Is there entrepreneurial talent among agencies/consumers? Who are the consumers agencies seek to place? Are there criteria, policies, and procedures in state and local agencies (VR, ED) for developing self-employment programs for consumers? Too much capacity would suggest no need for the program; too little would suggest nonviability. By examining this area, states or regions can determine program viability, as well as the extent to which training and technical assistance capacity building needs to be a component of the program.

Public Sector Attitudes. Certainly the attitudes of local and state level agencies can affect feasibility and program design. Is there a desire for assistance in corporate or business

venture development? Is there an entrepreneurial desire among agencies? What is the degree of risk perceived by agency staff to business development and community placement? Do agencies want to become less dependent upon governmental funding? Is there interest in collaboration across agencies with common missions? Determining the extent of support for economic development programs helps identify potential advocates for these initiatives and possible pilot sites. Strong interest in independence from governmental funding can lead to substantial interest and action in developing business ventures.

Social/Economic/Political/Cultural Trends. Forces beyond an individual's control can create a climate that fosters economic development. Do rural areas have fewer businesses to contact? Do state/federal/local legislation and policies promote placement? Is there legislative interest in converting service recipients into taxpayers and possibly employers? Is the level of human service funding flat or declining? Are there ever increasing waiting lists for adult services?

Rural areas with few existing businesses suggests the need for creating jobs through business ventures. Federal laws such as the Rehabilitation Act promote community placement and funding for job placement and support. As states and counties convert sheltered slots to community employment, agency efforts will follow. Efforts to promote transition from school to work can generate support for business development and corporate initiative programs. Interest in having consumers (and agencies) become less reliant upon tax support can create opportunities for placement and business creation. A needs assessment will allow you to gauge the strength of these forces and determine if they can be used to justify a statewide initiative.

Business Development Example. Since 1988, Pennsylvania has operated a business development program called the Job Creation Program. The Corporation for Owner-Operated Projects (CO-OP) and the Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation jointly offer this cooperative program. The objective of Project Job Creation is to assist business development in the state while simultaneously creating jobs for people with disabilities. The project assists

businesses in expanding its workforce through technical assistance and financial resources for equipment purchases. In exchange for these resources, businesses agree to hire people with disabilities as part of the expanded workforce. The following is a summary of the Job Creation Program environmental assessment results (Brown, personal commuication, 1993).

Business Development Example

Consumer/Consumer Organization Assessment

- Vocational rehabilitation clients expressed need for assistance to become employed.
- Vocational rehabilitation clients expressed desire for jobs with benefits such as paid leave, holidays, profit sharing, pensions, vision care etc.
- Vocational rehabilitation clients expressed desire for jobs with promotion potential.

Private Sector Assessment

- Businesses interested in resources to increase productivity, sales, and profits.
- Businesses interested in expansion.
- Communities could commit resources to improve local economies.

Public Sector Assessment

- Agencies expressed interest in more manufacturing jobs for consumers
- Agencies were interested in job opportunities for people with more severe disabilities/employment challenges.
- Agencies interested in serving people considered chronically unemployed.

Table 7: Business Development Example

Corporate Initiative Example. Employment Resources, Inc. (ERI) operates a statewide corporate initiative in Wisconsin. The environmental assessment factors that shaped ERI's job development initiative are presented below. These elements were drawn from coalition members' experiences with five years of statewide effort to expand local supported employment agency job development capacity (Kidder, personal communication, 1993).

Corporate Initiative Example

Consumer/Consumer Organization Assessment

- Consumers expressed need for broader range of occupational options.
- Consumers expressed desire for better paying jobs.
- Consumer groups desired jobs with career enhancement opportunities.

Private Sector Assessment

- Trade Assn. directors indicated interest in promoting SE to members.
- Growing number of Wisconsin firms promoting workforce diversity and indicating willingness to hire supported employees.
- Key executives in trade associations had positive experiences with SE.
- Several industries experienced problems recruiting and/or retaining personnel for entry level positions.
- A number of larger firms expressed interest in community involvement and viewed a statewide job development entity as offering a single point of contact for this purpose that would also offer quality assurance.

Public Sector Assessment

- There was a well developed network of SE agencies across state.
- Agencies indicated the need for access to larger employers, particularly in the manufacturing sector.
- Several state agencies expressed interest in pooling job development efforts because of declining resources for new initiatives.
- VR agency was interested in increasing number of successful closures through stronger partnership with private sector businesses.

Table 8: Corporate Initiative Example

Proposed Action Plan for Assessing the Environment

The following steps are offered as a means by which the reader can develop a coalition and conduct an environmental assessment.

Step 1: Assuming a core group of coalition partners indicate a willingness to

participate, review the assessment factors and the case studies presented and assign specific questions and activities on the basis of their role (consumer, public, or private sector), interests and expertise. The questions need not be exhaustively researched at this stage. Rather, participants should simply gather the preliminary evidence necessary to determine need for regional or statewide job or business development programs.

Step 2: Convene the group and review the information gathered through the preliminary needs assessment. Identify the key factors within each of the three sectors assessed, prioritize the factors, and reach consensus on whether there is sufficient need to justify the development of a strategic plan. If necessary, identify the additional information needed and who will collect it. Be sure to obtain the input of members unable to attend meetings and fill them in as to the outcomes afterwards. This is essential to keeping them included. End each meeting with an identification of other potential coalition members, particularly if there is assessment information that your coalition is not broad enough to accurately gauge.

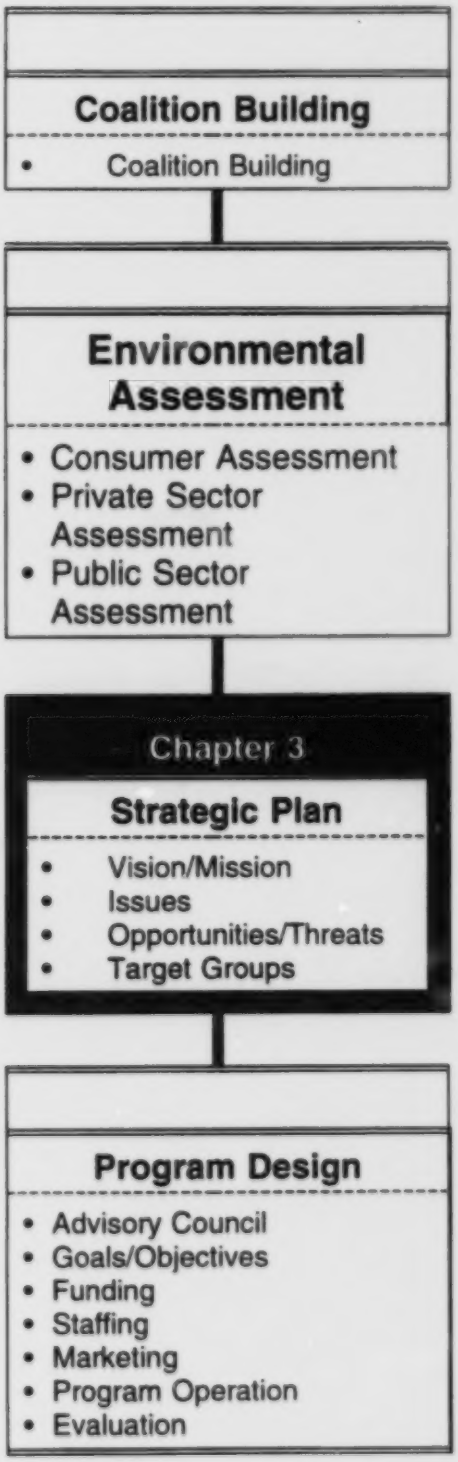
Step 3: As a group, prepare a document that summarizes the environmental assessment and builds the case for the need to establish a business or corporate initiative. This document can be used to attract other partners and build support for your initiative.

Summary

Building a coalition and assessing the environment are critical first steps in planning for regional or statewide business and corporate initiatives. Attracting champions and identifying the needs and capacities of consumers, private sector businesses, and public sector

agencies should be the focus of the environmental assessment. Review of the assessment data by the coalition should assist in determining if there is sufficient support within a state or region to justify conducting the strategic planning process. This planning process is the focus of Chapter 3.

Chapter 3: Strategic Plan



Strategic Plan

Once a coalition has been assembled and the group has completed an environmental assessment showing the need for a regional or statewide business and or corporate initiative, a strategic plan can be developed. Strategic planning is the process of using the identified needs and capacities of consumers and private and public sectors to set forth principles that will guide the design and implementation of these programs (Bryson, 1992). In Part I of this chapter, an overview of the strategic planning process is presented (IBM, 1991; Peirce, Hagstrom & Steinbach, 1979) with a list of eleven strategic issues that may be addressed. The reader is presented with a strategy to interpret the identified issue as opportunities or threats to program establishment. In Part II, a proposed action plan is presented to assist a coalition in developing a strategic plan. Case study examples of key issues that states or regions might analyze as opportunities or threats also are presented. These issues were identified by other states in their strategic planning process and are offered as examples for readers seeking additional detail.

Overview of the Strategic Planning Process

The first step of a strategic decision-making process is the gathering of information (IBM, 1991). As indicated in Chapter 2, each coalition of stakeholders must analyze the capabilities and needs of consumers and the private and public sectors. Based on a prioritized set of environmental factors, a strategic plan for a state or region can be developed.

Strategic planning has become a familiar buzzword. It can mean several different things from long-range projects to detailed monthly objectives. Any plan is useful only if the group is committed to using it systematically to improve the state or regional business or corporate initiative outcomes. A strategic plan and the process of developing it can be a powerful tool for making the coalition group effective and viable. Each coalition member must actively participate. The following is a strategic planning approach. Adopting it requires coalition members to think in broader terms than themselves. They must keep in mind the "big picture" and understand the perspectives of other stakeholders involved in the coalition.

The steps in a strategic planning process:

1. Create a vision statement.
2. Develop a mission statement.
3. Identify key strategic issues.
4. Identify issues as opportunities or threats.
5. Determine program feasibility.
6. Identify target groups.

from: IBM, 1992; Bryson, 1991

Table 1: Strategic Planning Steps

Successful strategic planning is based on a broad knowledge of the community and its capabilities (IBM, 1992; U. S. Economic Development Adminstration, undated). It is future-oriented and affects the long term economic growth and development of the community. A strategic plan provides the vision for implementing a successful campaign to reach business and/or corporate initiative goals and provides a forum for making decisions in pursuit of these goals. Each of the components listed in Table 1 will be discussed in the following pages.

Step 1: Create a Vision Statement

The coalition should create a vision statement that predicts a desired future state of employment opportunities for people with disabilities. A vision statement is an opportunity to look to the future and dream of how services and opportunities should be; not how they are today. The vision should be based on needed social change, shared values, and ideals.

The process of developing a vision statement is valuable in building a team or group such as the coalition. Creating a shared coalition vision is like developing any other product, and it will take discussion, negotiation, and compromise. The vision statement should be based on the individual ideals of all coalition members.

During this process, the coalition would benefit from having a facilitator who is familiar with group process techniques. This person should not be affiliated with the coalition in order to lead the development of the vision statement. The first step is for each member to outline his/her personal vision for the coalition and share it with other members. Thus, before a shared vision can be developed, each individual must have a picture of his/her personal vision.

Once members are clear on their personal visions, the facilitator can assist them in combining individual coalition visions in a way acceptable to everyone. The coalition should reach consensus on a collective vision for the future based on its understanding of the environmental assessment. Three sample vision statements are presented below.

Sample Vision Statements

Wisconsin	Persons with severe disabilities will have choices in the nature and location of the work that they do (Kidder, personal communication, 1993).
Iowa	Persons with disabilities will have easier access to a wider array of occupational choices.
Oklahoma	Employment opportunities will be increased for people with disabilities through a public and private sector partnership (Manuelian, 1992).

Table 2: Developing a Vision Statement

Step 2: Develop a Mission Statement

Once the coalition membership agrees on a vision statement for the future, it should develop a mission statement. The mission statement should specify the actions necessary to realize the stated vision. This creates a focus, direction, and common purpose to the lofty, idealistic vision statement.

Sample Mission Statements

Wisconsin	Create new job opportunities through business development and access existing job opportunities through identifying and meeting private sector labor market needs for people with severe disabilities.
Iowa	Expand employment opportunities for persons with disabilities while simultaneously meeting the personnel needs of Iowa businesses.
Pennsylvania	Assist businesses in developing and obtaining jobs for workers with disabilities (Brown, personal communication, 1993).

Table 3: Developing a Mission Statement

Step 3: Identify Key Strategic Issues

After establishing a vision and mission, the coalition of stakeholders should identify the issues that must be addressed in establishing business and or corporate initiatives designed to achieve the stated mission. Issues refer to the pragmatic questions that must be answered in order to create regional or statewide economic development programs. Based on the experiences in Wisconsin, Iowa, and Pennsylvania, the following eleven categories have been identified.

1. Funding Source Issues
2. Funding Trend
3. State Agency/Funding Policy Issues
4. Advocacy/Lobby Issues
5. Labor/Consumer Employment Trend Issues
6. Business/Job Development Impact Issues
7. Technical Assistance/Staff Resource Issues
8. Program Feasibility/Demonstration Issues
9. State Agency Program Support Issues
10. Programmatic Methodology Issues
11. Consumer Employment Support Issues

Each coalition's strategic issues should be listed and prioritized based on how critical they are to the mission statement. For instance, one state may find that "consumer employment support issues" (item #11 in the above list) is its first priority, while another state might find that "state agency/funding policy issues" is its first issue. Information concerning all identified key strategic issues can be obtained using the strategies listed below.

Obtain information on key strategic issues by...

- interviewing consumers, agency directors, funding sources, business leaders, and advocacy organizations;
- interviewing leaders within target organizations;
- surveying consumers, VR counselors, business leaders, service providers, and economic development agencies;
- reviewing state agency reports and professional/trade literature;
- attending training/informational seminars;
- reading agency/industry publications or newspaper articles;
- gleaning information through informal networks;
- obtaining information through direct experience;
- conducting focus groups.

Table 4: Strategies for Information Gathering

Step 4: Identify Issues as Opportunities or Threats

The strategic issues identified by the coalition should be characterized in terms of an opportunity or threat to program development. An issue can be considered an opportunity for creating a program initiative if it presents resources that might be leveraged in support of regional or statewide economic development initiatives. Opportunities can consist of economic and political trends, potential funding sources, and/or technical resources. Opportunities can include special interest groups willing to advocate on your behalf or advocacy organizations, lobby organizations, and state agencies with parallel philosophy and mission statements. Success stories and exemplary projects which demonstrate program feasibility and potential outcomes also can be strong forces favoring a coalition's mission.

While research into some issues might uncover opportunities, it might also reveal threats to a business or corporate initiative program. Threats can be defined as barriers that thwart the creation or success of a program. They can consist of economic, political, and program funding trends at odds with the establishment of economic development initiatives. Threats also can take the form of insufficient agency support capability. Rigid funding guidelines, bureaucratic policy, and lack of state infrastructure for political and program coalition can be particularly strong threats to program feasibility.

The use of a **force-field analysis** may be an effective strategy to implement during the process of identifying opportunities and threats (Inge, Barcus, Brooke, and Everson, 1991). This strategy developed by Kurt Lewin (Eitington, 1989) can be utilized to identify the driving forces (opportunities) that facilitate movement towards the establishment of an economic development initiative and the restraining forces (threats) that impede such movement. Use of a force-field analysis can help in diagnosing specific problems that are inhibiting program success. Steps in the process include the following:

Steps in a Force-Field Analysis

1. Identify forces that will assist the coalition in achieving its mission and those that will inhibit the mission. These are called **driving** (opportunities) and **restraining** (threats) forces.
2. Rank these forces in the order of most to least influence on the coalition's mission.
3. Rate how easy or difficult it will be to bring about changes in the driving (opportunities) and restraining forces (threats).
4. Identify action plans for facilitating opportunities and inhibiting threats.
5. Select plans for implementation.

(Modified from materials developed by Dr. Carroll Londoner, VCU, Richmond, VA.)

Table 5: Using a Force-Field Analysis

In order for the reader to understand the use of this strategy, the following example is offered. Assume that the coalition has identified funding as its priority issue. The members can analyze the effects of this issue on the establishment of an economic development initiative by first laying out the opportunities and threats in the following fashion.

Force-Field Analysis

Issue: Funding Source

Opportunities Forces Favoring the Mission	**Threats** Forces Resisting the Mission
1. There is a "champion" in the state economic development agency who is interested in developing a coalition to establish a business development initiative.	1. Management from VR is not "on board" for developing a business initiative.
2. Funding Sources are available.	2. Budget short-fall exists in the state.
3. Staff member from one funding source is available to be a coalition member.	3. Staff to apply for foundation funds have not been identified.
4. Foundation money could be used as "match" dollars for VR dollars.	4. There has been no demand from consumers requesting funds to create businesses.
5. There are several consumers who have been successful entrepreneurs in the state.	

Once the opportunities and threats have been identified, the coalition members can "weigh" them in relationship to each other. For instance, the fact that there are several successful consumer entrepreneurs in the state can inhibit threat #1. These individuals should be targeted as coalition members who can assist in bringing the VR management "on board". They also could begin to act as mentors to other consumers in the state who are interested in starting businesses but have never thought of requesting this service from VR. This inhibits threat #4. The fact that foundation money can be used to "match" federal dollars will counterbalance threat #2 of the budget short-fall. Although the coalition has not yet been able to target staff for grant writing (threat #3), the "champion" from the state economic development agency may be able to access resources to provide technical assistance in grant writing or target staff to assist in the process.

In this manner, the coalition can go about analyzing the opportunities and threats in order to facilitate its mission. Although this brainstorming process takes some effort, it should be well worth the time in bringing coalition members on board for economic development. The following pages outline some of the opportunities and threats identified by states who have gone through the economic development process. Although they are listed in a specific order, it is expected that each state undergoing the process will have its own ordered list of priorities.

Funding Trend. Opportunities exist where trends in program funding, legislation, and competing sources for funding are consistent with the vision, mission, and potential outcomes of a regional or statewide job creation/development initiative. A review of recently funded demonstration projects and legislation can help in determining these trends. Interviewing key legislators or funding sources can also help in determining these trends. Threats exist when the trends in funding involve deep programmatic cutbacks, and no funding exists for relevant demonstration projects. Additional threats exist when competing uses for funding cannot be included as a program target group and when competing uses of funding dominate all new or flexible sources of funding.

State Agency/Funding Policy. Opportunities exist where state administration, funding sources, or state agencies are promoting, or open to, new program initiatives and public/private sector partnerships. Opportunities also exist when key players have funding flexibility and understand that new program initiatives must be invested in for a minimum of two to three years to achieve a desired level of program outcomes and benefits. Threats exist when a state administration, funding sources, or state agencies do not believe in government's role in targeted job creation/development or are not willing to take the risks associated with new program initiatives. Threats also exist when funding sources have very rigid, performance-based guidelines. For instance, if the first year operational outcomes of a new program need to be comparable to the outcomes of a mature program, based upon the dollars expended on each, a threat exists for funding.

Advocacy/Lobby. Opportunities exist where potential advocacy or lobby efforts can be identified through individuals and organizations with values, philosophy, and mission consistent with

the new program initiative. Additional opportunities exist when a coalition of parents, consumers, advocacy organizations, lobby organizations, businesses and local provider agencies can be identified and brought together to effect funding, legislation and program development.

Threats exist when there is a lack of individuals and organizations available or willing to advocate or lobby for this type of programming. They also exist when individuals and organizations are available and willing to advocate or lobby but are not available or willing to work together to build a stronger coalition. In some cases, there is a strong interest, but there is merely a lack of time or resources available in working together to build a stronger coalition for new program development.

Labor/Consumer Employment Trend. Opportunities exist where trends in employment match the trends in consumer demand for jobs. Opportunities also exist for job creation/development programming when the trends in available jobs indicate that specific types, location or quality of jobs do not exist for people with disabilities. Threats to program development exist when the trends in employment opportunities are well-matched to the job opportunities currently being made available to people with a disability. Threats also exist when consumer demand for job opportunities do not warrant the development of a regional or statewide program.

Business/Corporate Initiative Impact. Opportunities exist where specific employment needs for people with disabilities are apparent within the state. These opportunities can more readily be determined once employment trends, current jobs, and demand for jobs by consumers have been documented. Program development opportunities exist for program development when individuals and organizations are willing to marshall support and resources to create specific types of employment opportunities. The motivator for agencies and individuals include better quality jobs, jobs in corporations or industries where employment is under-represented by people with disabilities, and increased employment opportunities for underserved groups (e.g., MI, TBI, challenging behavior). Opportunities also exist where individuals and organizations are interested and willing to marshall program support for specific types of business development, including businesses that

are: owned and operated by people with disabilities; developed by rehabilitation agencies; and developed in rural/weak local economies.

Threats exist when individuals or organizations are not interested in, or it is not within their mission/agenda to promote the creation/development of specific types of employment opportunities. Threats also exist when individuals or organizations cannot come to consensus on the type of employment opportunities that a program should target. The program design should be flexible enough to accommodate some differences in targeted employment goals. However, in order to develop a strong coalition, there still needs to be consensus on a prioritized list of employment issues.

Technical Assistance/Staff Resource. Opportunities exist where strong talent within individuals or organizations can be identified and recruited. This talent can be in the areas of grant writing, business development, financing, marketing, job development, and disability-related issues. The type of talent which is identified can help determine the type of program which has the strongest opportunity to be developed. Threats exist where there is a lack of a specific expertise which is critical to a specific type of program development. The threats which exist through the lack of this type of talent can also help determine the type of program which should not be developed unless/until this individual or organizational talent is identified and recruited to be a part of the coalition.

Program Feasibility/Demonstration. Opportunities exist where individual success stories can be identified to demonstrate the feasibility of a new program initiative. These success stories and exemplary service providers are important in building a coalition with key players such as economic development entities, the business community, state agencies, and other service providers. The success stories are much more effective for involving otherwise impartial but important key players when they are identified within the local community or state. Success stories can be referenced in other states yet they are not quite as effective in marshalling support and proving the feasibility of a new program initiative.

Threats exist where individual success stories cannot be identified to demonstrate the feasibility of a new program initiative. This manual and its authors can provide an adequate number of success stories from around the country. However, unless success stories are identified within the state, a threat may exist to new program development, since many people feel that each state is different. They may feel that because a program or project is successful in one state, it cannot be assumed that it will be successful in another.

State Agency Program Support. Opportunities exist where state agencies have programs, administrators, and staff that can be identified and brought into the coalition to develop a new program initiative. To be an opportunity, these program administrators and staff ideally are open to new initiatives, have a track record of achieving positive change, and are innovative and willing to engage in problem-solving. It may still be an opportunity if program administrators and staff are simply willing to take the time to listen and engage in the strategic planning and coalition building process. Opportunities also exist when state agencies, rehabilitation associations, and advocacy organizations are willing to support, market, and refer consumers to a newly created program.

Threats exist when appropriate program administration and staff of key state agencies are identified yet unwilling to take the time to listen and engage in the strategic planning and coalition building process. Threats may exist to program development if key state agencies, associations, or advocacy organizations are not willing to support, market, and refer clients to a newly created regional or statewide program. Threats also exist when leaders from the business community are not brought into the strategic planning and coalition building process when developing this new program initiative.

The participation of business leaders strengthens the coalition and demonstrates the feasibility of a program initiative achieving a public/private sector partnership. The lack of business leader participation is particularly threatening to program development when it comes to private sector concerns over unfair competition from not-for-profit agencies that develop business ventures. These concerns over unfair competition can best be addressed by business leaders who have input into

program design. The business leaders can also be positive influences as they reassure the business community that unfair competition has been addressed early on in the development of the program.

Programmatic Methodology. Opportunities exist when coalition members can refer to specific methodologies which demonstrate the viability of a new program initiative. Funding sources and state agencies are much more likely to support a new program initiative if they are convinced that proven methodologies exist for evaluating program cost effectiveness, project screening criteria, means to determine employer needs and human resource department policies/procedures. This guide provides specific program design, case studies, references, and exemplary program practitioners to assist in outlining specific methodologies.

Threats exist where funding sources and state agency concerns are not addressed regarding the risks that are evident when starting any new type of regional or statewide programming. Threats also exist when funding sources and state agencies cannot allow a suitable amount of time for program staff to become proficient in implementing certain program procedures.

Consumer Employment Support. Opportunities exist where sufficient agencies and support services are in place to justify a job/business development effort. If a strong network of providers is in place, a case can be made that your state/region has the supported employment infrastructure to successfully develop and maintain jobs/business ventures. Threats exist where the number of support agencies and/or the quality of support services cannot justify a regional or statewide job/business development effort. It is counter-productive to create/develop employment opportunities for consumers if support services are inadequate or unavailable. To raise and then not meet expectations for the consumer, private, and public sectors would have serious repercussions for supported employment.

Step 5: Determine Program Feasibility

The coalition membership must determine the feasibility of pursuing the development and implementation of business or corporate initiatives within the state or region. Program feasibility is suggested if opportunities for program development outweigh threats, opportunities can be

capitalized upon; and threats can be minimized/overcome. Clearly, the process of weighing opportunities and threats to determine program feasibility is subjective. However, implementing a business and or corporate initiative is not a static process. It will require the coalition members to continuously review, revise, implement, and evaluate efforts designed to reach the coalition's goals and objectives. The coalition members will need to identify the key strategic issues, specify how opportunities may be capitalized upon and by whom, describe how threats may be overcome or minimized, and implement required strategies. There can be a long list of opportunities and a short list of threats, yet the new program may not be feasible if the coalition cannot access opportunities or overcome serious threats.

This manual cannot offer the reader a firm criterion for when to proceed. The decision must be made by coalition members, based on their analysis of important strategic issues and the coalition members willingness to invest the time, energy, and resources necessary to initiate a viable program. Thus, having a strong coalition and reaching stakeholder consensus regarding initiative feasibility are important. Chapter 4 provides suggestions for developing a business development and or a corporate initiative.

Step 6: Identify Target Groups

Assuming that a business and or corporate initiative is deemed feasible, the target groups to be served by this new initiative should be identified. Identifying target groups to be served through a job or business development program is a critical step of a strategic plan. It gives focus to coalition stakeholders' efforts and helps identify additional partners for the expanded coalition.

When determining target groups, consideration should be given to the size and breadth of the initiative. The larger and more diverse the target group served by the program, the larger and stronger the coalition must be. For example, if your business development initiative targets entrepreneurs with disabilities, rehabilitation agencies, and existing businesses that will receive assistance to expand in return for hiring people with disabilities, your coalition will have many

partners. However, unless substantial resources are devoted to a program, it may be difficult for any one member of the target group to be adequately impacted by the program. Therefore, consider selecting target groups on the basis of both program budget, the strength of the group's interest/commitment, willingness to participate in the coalition, and the ability to capitalize upon opportunities or help overcome threats. A generic list of potential program target groups is provided below.

Potential Target Groups

A. Business Development Programming

- Entrepreneurs with disabilities
- Rehabilitation agencies and other not-for-profit organizations
- Small local businesses that expand and integrate employees with disabilities
- People with chronic mental illness, physical disabilities, or sensory impairments who get involved with a cooperative business venture
- Service providers

B. Corporate Initiative Programming

- Corporations with statewide, multiple sites
- Trade associations
- Large corporations
- Service providers
- People with chronic mental illness, physical disabilities, sensory impairments, mental retardation, head injury, and/or developmental disabilities

Table 6: Identifying Potential Target Groups

The six steps presented above offer the reader a step by step process for developing a strategic plan. By following the suggestions in this guide, the reader and her or his coalition partners should be able to develop strategies for implementing a business and/or corporate initiative. Thus creating public-private sector partnerships focused on increasing job opportunities for people with disabilities.

A Proposed Action Plan for Developing a Strategic Plan

Step 1. Assuming that your initial coalition has conducted an environmental assessment showing strong program feasibility, you are ready to develop a strategic plan. A mailing should precede any meetings. The mailing should include a recap of prioritized environmental factors and a list of key issues. Each coalition member could be asked to prioritize the list of key issues and recommend new coalition members for the up-coming strategic planning meeting.

Step 2. The strategic planning meeting could begin by drafting a vision statement of how a new program initiative could impact people with disabilities. Examples of vision statements could be provided to facilitate the process. A draft vision statement could be provided for others to respond to which further speeds up the process.

Step 3. With an agreed upon vision statement, a mission statement could be drafted which indicates how this vision for people with disabilities will be accomplished through a job/business development program. As in Step 2, examples of mission statements, such as a draft mission statement, could be provided to speed up the process. Once a vision and mission statement are developed, a second meeting can be scheduled to analyze those issues that present opportunities and threats.

Step 4. With a vision and mission statement in place, a prioritized list of issues could be developed. Coalition members should list key issues that they believe will impact program establishment positively or negatively. A facilitator could reconcile similarities and differences in the rankings and help reach consensus as to the main issues.

Step 5. With a prioritized list of key issues in which consensus has been achieved, the opportunities and threats to program development starting with the top ranked issue could be

discussed. Case study examples of key issues, opportunities and threats for a business or corporate initiative program could be referenced to stimulate ideas and discussion.

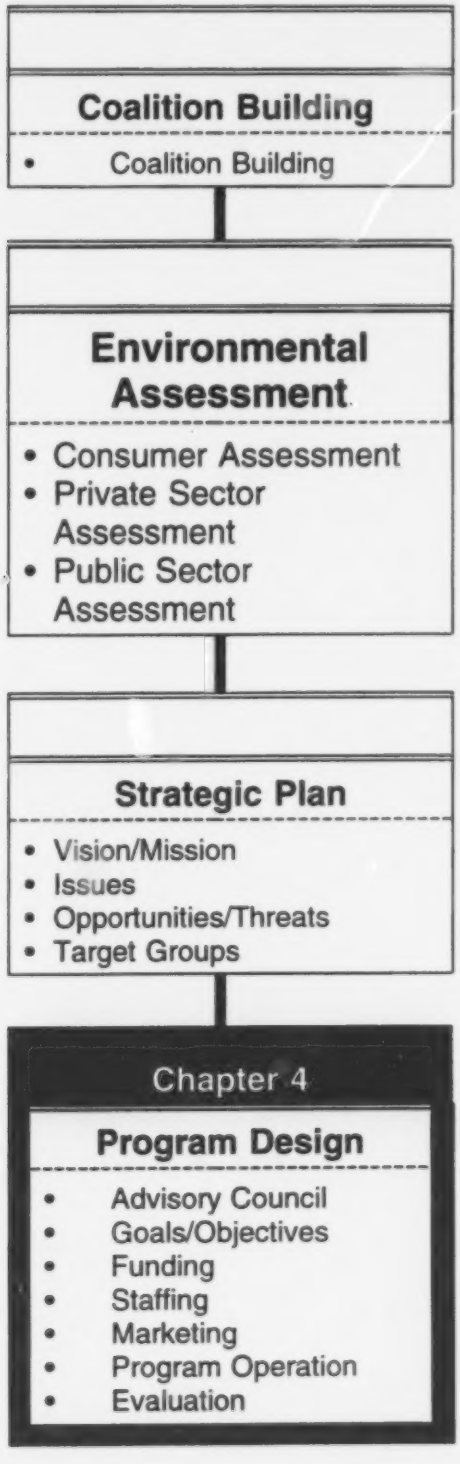
Step 6. For each opportunity, the coalition should specify how they plan to capitalize on this positive force. Likewise, action steps to overcome potential threats should be identified. The case study examples that illustrate how opportunities and threats in other states were addressed may be helpful.

Step 7. With a prioritized list of opportunities and threats, the coalition can determine the feasibility of developing a new program initiative. This decision should be based on stakeholder consensus that opportunities outweigh threats, opportunities can be leveraged and threats can be overcome.

Step 8. Assuming coalition members agree on the feasibility of a new program initiative, specific target groups, or beneficiaries, should be identified.

Step 9. Implementing a business and or corporate initiative is not a static process but will require the coalition members to continuously review, revise, implement, and evaluate efforts directed at reaching the coalition's goals and objectives. The coalition members will need to identify the key strategic issues, specify how opportunities may be capitalized upon and by whom, identify how threats may be overcome or minimized, implement required strategies, and evaluate the progress.

Chapter 4: Program Design



Program Design

The purpose of this chapter is to describe a process for designing an effective business development or corporate initiative. A series of considerations are presented and discussed. The reader and his or her coalition can use this information to design a business development or a corporate initiative program tailored to the state's or region's needs and available resources.

Advisory Council

The first step in orchestrating a state or regional business development or corporate initiative is to select a smaller, manageable program advisory council from the coalition membership to guide program design, implementation, and evaluation (Nietupski, 1992). Efforts of the coalition during the development of a vision statement, mission, conducting an environmental assessment, and identification of the target group will offer an opportunity to identify strong contributors from the public, private, and consumer sectors. These individual coalition members will make good candidates for the coalition's business development and/or corporate initiative program advisory council.

As a result of experiences in Wisconsin, Iowa, Pennsylvania, and Oklahoma several key considerations in selecting the advisory council members have been identified. First, the advisory council should be small enough in number to be manageable, yet large enough to be representative (e.g. 6-10 people) of all the stakeholders. The council should consist of private, consumer, and public economic development sector representatives at least equal to public human service sector representatives. The advisory council members should be

knowledgeable about finding resources and able to assist in proposal writing to obtain funding. Participants must be willing to commit time, energy, influence, and financial resources to the economic development program.

Goals and Objectives

The advisory council should develop program goals and objectives based on the environmental analysis, key strategic issues, and opportunities or threats identified in the strategic plan. Goals are broad statements of intent and objectives are the specific outcomes that the coalition wishes to attain. The following table offers examples of goals.

Sample Goals

Business Development Goals:

- Provide access to business development resources for people with disabilities.
- Create businesses and jobs in rural areas for people with disabilities.
- Develop business ventures for agency conversion to community-based services.
- Generate additional sources of revenue through business development to become less dependent on government funding.
- Create flexible, tolerant, integrated job opportunities for people with more severe disabilities and challenging behavior.
- Create a better range of integrated job opportunities that meet the aspirations/capabilities of people with disabilities.
- Develop business ventures which offer people with disabilities ownership and management participation.
- Develop business ventures which demonstrate vocational capability of, and heighten community interaction with people who have disabilities.

Corporate Initiative Goals

- Develop a regional or statewide business awareness campaign.
- Develop jobs through industry trade associations.
- Develop a corporate strategy targeted to larger firms or firms with statewide offices.
- Develop business capacity for natural supports.
- Implement a public sector training effort to build provider capacity.
- Develop a public sector job development initiative.
- Create a union job development initiative.

Table 1: Sample Coalition Goals

Business Development Example. Since 1992, The Tennessee Initiative on Employment (TIE) has been building a coalition to support the Tennessee Business Development Initiative (TBDI). TBDI provides customized technical assistance in small business development to non-profit agencies serving people with disabilities and entrepreneurs with disabilities. TIE has shared its knowledge of the disability community with the expertise in small business development of The Tennessee Network for Community Economic Development (TNCED).

Tennessee Business Development Initiative's Goal and Objectives

TBDI Goal:

The primary goal of TBDI is to create integrated jobs for people with disabilities. In turn, agencies have another means for enhancing their community-based conversion efforts and entrepreneurs with disabilities have opportunities to turn their dreams into successful business ventures.

TBDI Objectives:

1. Competitive business expertise will be developed by, in, and for the disability community, broadening expertise in sales, marketing operations, accounting, and finance.

2. The number and quality of integrated jobs available and accessible to people with disabilities will increase.

3. The talents, skills, and economic independence of consumers will be recognized and respected through their participation in, operation of and potential ownership of business ventures. The following will be accomplished in three years:

   - 85 organizations and consumers will apply for technical assistance
   - 30 projects will receive technical assistance
   - 20 business ventures will start-up or expand
   - 110-150 integrated jobs will be created
   - 40-70 jobs will be created for people with disabilities
   - $900,000-$1,250,000 will be leveraged in financing

from: Martin-Petty, personal communication, 1993

Table 2: Business Development Initiative Case Study Example

Corporate Initiative Example. Iowa established a statewide job development program in 1991 through receipt of an Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) supported employment systems change grant. This project, termed the Iowa Creative Employment Options (Iowa CEO) Corporate Initiative, built an initial coalition of public sector and consumer group collaborators.

Iowa CEO Corporate Initiative Goals And Objectives

1. **Market supported employment to Iowa businesses in partnership with Trade Associations.**

   1.1 Obtain commitments from 1 - 2 trade associations per year to promote supported employment to their membership.
   1.2 Write articles on supported employment for industry publications to inform members about supported employment and its benefits.
   1.3 Educate member businesses on supported employment and its benefits through state/regional presentations.
   1.4 Develop material packets that assist member businesses in accessing supported employment.
   1.5 Link member businesses with local provider agencies through trade association assistance.

2. **Market supported employment to Iowa businesses with statewide offices/facilities/operations/affiliates.**

   2.1 Obtain commitments from one corporation per year to promote supported employment within the organization.
   2.2 Pilot supported employment in one or more sites in partnership with Iowa CEO.
   2.3 Publicize successful pilots through corporate publications.
   2.4 Educate affiliates on supported employment and benefits through presentations.
   2.5 Expand supported employment beyond pilot sites.

3. **Build local agency capacity to develop quality jobs and effectively support consumers and the business.**

   3.1 Develop/disseminate materials on job development procedures for/to local agencies.
   3.2 Provide training on job development strategies within given industries.
   3.3 Provide on-site technical assistance to agencies in developing jobs.

Table 3: Corporate Initiative Case Study Example

Several sources of information were drawn upon when conducting the environmental assessment used to justify the establishment of the Iowa CEO Corporate Initiative. This included DD Council input; published research on the status of supported employment in Iowa; direct contact with consumers, their families, and support agencies through previously conducted school-to-supported employment transition projects; job service publications on employment trends; and information gained from a recently established Supported Employment Management Information System (SEMIS).

Program Location

The advisory council must determine where the business development or corporate initiative program will be housed. Several options are open to states or regions, including housing the program within a state agency (e.g. Economic Development, VR, DD Council, University-UAP, MH/MR/DD). Another strategy is to establish the initiative within a business association such as the state or local chamber of commerce or a retail merchants association. A third strategy is to place the new program initiative within an existing or newly created independent, not-for-profit organization.

Each of these options has its advantages and disadvantages. Placing the program in a state agency creates potential for credibility within the public sector and potential for long-term program funding including program legislation. The disadvantage to a public agency location is the potential for cumbersome bureaucratic processes. This may include slow program start-up, restrictive, drawn-out staff recruitment, and purchasing/sub-contract procedures. Housing an initiative in a business association can offer a perception of legitimacy to the business community and potential entrepreneurs. This type of organization may have more flexibility and be less bureaucratic. However, finding an organization of this

type which is willing to house a start-up program with no track record, may be difficult. Also, a business association may have difficulty securing long-term program funding.

Independent, not-for-profit agency status allows for flexibility, autonomy, and entrepreneurial innovation. Housing a business development initiative in this type of organization may have more flexibility and be less bureaucratic but may also limit long-term funding possibilities. The following table identifies factors to consider when determining the location of a business development or corporate initiative program and sample site locations.

Location Considerations

1. Credibility with the private sector?
2. Accessibility by consumer sector?
3. Impact on the human service system?
4. Flexibility to pursue goals/objectives?
5. Likelihood of long-term program funding?

Site Location Examples

1.	**Wisconsin**:	Community Development Finance Authority (1986-90, VR funded) Wisconsin Department of Development (1990-93, state funded through separate legislation)
2.	**Michigan**:	Private, Not-For-Profit Association (1988-91) College Affiliated Program of a Community College (1991-to present)
3.	**Pennsylvania:**	Private, Not-For-Profit Economic Development Agency (1988-to present)
4.	**Tennessee:**	Private, Not-For-Profit Community Development Agency (1993-to present)

Table 4: Program Location

Funding

The scope of a business development or corporate initiative program will be determined by the available funding. Funding can be a vexing problem as states seek to curb spending

and balance budgets. Several options that could be pursued are identified in the following table.

Possible Funding Sources

State VR agencies may have unspent, encumbered dollars at the end of a fiscal year that could be dedicated to this effort.

State VR agencies may have entitlement dollars where the state cannot leverage all the Title I dollars based on available state match appropriations. A third party source of match may be able to leverage federal VR funding for regional or statewide business development programming.

VR or State Human Service agencies might contract with another state, quasi-state or independent organization to fund business development programming or training services.

DD Councils might fund such an initiative under their employment goal area.

Federal funding in the form of **OSERS grants**, including **Projects with Industry** (PWI) grants, or **statewide transition systems change grants** might be considered.

Foundation grants might be a viable source, particularly if a proposal reflects public and private sector collaboration which can leverage additional sources of funding.

State general purpose revenue through the budget process or separate legislation represents another funding option, particularly if grant dollars initially funded a successful effort that generated broad-based support.

Private sector utilities, businesses, business associations, and community organizations could fund program components based on targeted economic development or community service outcomes/benefits.

from: Nietupski, 1992

Table 5: Possible Funding Sources

The advisory council should identify as many funding sources as possible. Sources of funding will vary from state to state and region to region. The following table offers examples of funding sources that have been utilized.

Program Funding Examples

- **Business Development Initiative-Wisconsin, 1986-90**
  WI Division of Vocational Rehabilitation-$100,000/yr.

- **Business Development Initiative-Wisconsin, 1990-93**
  State General Revenue (legislation)-$300,000/yr.

- **Business Development Initiative-Wisconsin, 1993-to present**
  State General Revenue (legislation)-$300,000/yr.
  WI Division of Vocational Rehabilitation-$220,000/yr.

- **Handicapper Business Specialty Center-Michigan, 1991-to present**
  Lansing Community College-$40,000/yr.
  Small Business Administration through Wayne State University-$35,000/yr.
  Michigan Department of Commerce-$15,000/yr.

- **The New Hire Program-Pennsylvania, 1988-to present**
  Penn. Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
  The Department of Commerce
  A Foundation
  Job Training Partnership Act funding
  Coalition funding total-$300,000/yr.

- **Tenn. Business Development Initiative-Tennessee, 1993-to present**
  Developmental Disabilities Council
  TN Division of Rehabilitation Services
  A Foundation
  Proposals Pending-$110,000/yr. Potential Program Budget

Table 6: Program Funding Examples

Budget Considerations. On the basis of an analysis of potential funding sources the advisory council, along with other coalition partners, should develop and submit proposals to obtain funding for the business development or corporate initiative program. Long-term and contingency sources of funding should be identified and established. An operating budget should be part of the proposal. The particulars of the budget will be determined by a variety of factors which are listed in the following table.

Budget Factors to Consider

- What is the scope of the program goals/objectives?
- Is this a demonstration project or on-going program?
- How many target groups or program recipients (people w/disabilities, rehabilitation agencies, small businesses) will be served?
- What is the geographic target area: entire state vs. region?
- How much money is available through which funding sources?
- What is the anticipated intensity of staff involvement (program administration vs. direct consultation)?
- Will the economic development program use venture development grants for recipients to hire outside, specialized consultants?
- Can the program use an investment fund to leverage bank funding?

Table 7: Developing a Program Budget

In general, it is recommended that at least two staff are included in the program budget. This allows for joint strategizing and problem-solving, collaboration, back-up when more than one activity must be conducted simultaneously, and moral support. Budgets should also allow for sufficient travel, phone contact, clerical support, training, and marketing material development.

Case Study Example. In Wisconsin, three levels of funding have been secured in the last seven years. These three funding levels can serve as sample budgets at different funding levels for other states in planning their process.

Wisconsin Business Development Initiative's Program Budgets

1986-1990

	$ 65,000	One Full Time Program staff
		One Half Time Program assistant
		Material Development
		Travel, Phone, Rent, Supplies, etc.
+	$ 35,000	Venture Development Grants
	$100,000	Total Annual Budget

1990-1993

	$150,000	Two Full Time Program staff
		One Full Time Program assistant
		Material Development
		Travel, Phone, Rent, Supplies, etc.
	$105,000	Venture Development Grants
+	$ 45,000	Equity Investment Fund
	$300,000	Total Annual Budget

1993-to present

	$275,000	Three Full Time Program staff
		One Full and One Half Time Program assistant
		One Half Time Publications Specialist
		Material Development
		Travel, Phone, Rent, Supplies, etc.
	$200,000	Venture Development Grants
+	$ 45,000	Equity Investment Fund
	$520,000	Total Annual Budget

developed by: Verstegen

Table 8: Sample Budget for a Business Development Initiative

Staffing

Staff competencies should include both business experience (e.g., sales, marketing, market research, business planning, accounting, and financial packaging) and supported employment commitment and expertise. However, such a combination of skills and experience in any one individual is difficult to find. One solution may be to pair staff from

complementary disciplines. Another approach is to reduce staffing and put resources into hiring project consultants whose areas of discipline complement the program staff person's ability. There are several potential sources of qualified staff that might be considered:

Staff Qualifications

For a business development program consider hiring...

- experienced business consultants in the areas of sales, marketing, market research, accounting and financial packaging;
- successful entrepreneurs with enough formal training to assist the clients with business planning;
- university Business Schools' staff or graduate students;
- rehabilitation professional with a strong business background;
- staff from small business or targeted economic development programs within the state;
- staff from a business development program for people with disabilities in other states.

For a corporate initiative program consider hiring...

- successful job developers within local/state agencies (e.g. VR, JTPA, supported employment agencies);
- university rehabilitation, special education, or business program students or staff;
- staff from similar programs in other states;
- successful sales people with human service interests and values.

Table 9: Staff Qualifications

The advisory council should structure the training and orientation of newly hired staff. The purpose of the training and orientation effort should be to further enhance the values, commitment, and enthusiasm for entrepreneurship and integrated community employment.

It should introduce the staff to the kinds of small businesses and job opportunities that the program strives to develop. The training should include the background information necessary for staff to develop a viable workplan, policies and procedures, and conduct a successful economic development program.

Training and orientation can take a number of forms. Orientation sessions with key advisory council members offers the opportunity to explain expectations, how and why the program was developed, and who are the key players available to offer support. Review of materials from similar projects in other states or previous efforts in your state offers an opportunity to benefit from the experiences of other business development or corporate initiative programs. Visits to exemplary entrepreneurs with disabilities, entrepreneurial rehabilitation agencies, supported employment placement sites, and programs in other states can offer an opportunity to observe first hand a functioning program. It may be helpful for advisory council members to accompany staff on site visits. In particular, consider de-briefing sessions (staff and Council member) following site visits to answer questions, put observations into perspective for staff and assist in integrating their experience into their workplan. Conference calls with staff from other business development programs provides a chance to ask questions, clarify strategies, and brainstorm new approaches.

Program Marketing Plan

Based on the environmental assessment, the strategic plan, and input from the advisory council, the business development program or corporate initiative staff can begin to target potential projects. A marketing plan should be developed to ensure that the benefits and resources of the program are known to targeted recipients. The business development program's marketing plan should make sure that there is a sufficient number of applicants from which to select entrepreneurial business development projects. The corporate initiative program's plan should make sure that it generates a comprehensive list of those corporations, trade associations or awareness vehicles that might be targeted for job development.

Business Development Initiative. A marketing plan should, at minimum, consist of

desired message, media plan, projected budget, and results. The desired message is a description of the business development program mission, goals, objectives, and benefits available to entrepreneurs for developing a business development initiative. It should consist of key program goals and objectives, benefits and resources, application process, eligible applicants, selection criteria, and organization and staff qualifications.

The media plan should describe how the information about the business development program will be distributed to consumer, public, and private sector audiences. The business development program staff should use a variety of methods to promote their services. Various methods for promoting the program may include:

Marketing Strategies

- applicant's informational seminar/conference
- statewide/regional conference presentations
- statewide/regional training seminars
- direct mail (bulk to organizations to distribute, mailing lists)
- videotape presentation for distribution
- press releases
- newspaper/magazine articles
- informational interviews with potential clients
- telephone solicitation to key organizations
- application manual

Table 10: Various Marketing Strategies for Promoting a Business Development Initiative

Primary and secondary state and local agencies that could distribute program material and refer potential entrepreneurs should also be identified . In addition, the staff should determine when, how many, or how often the various mediums will be utilized on an annual basis.

The advisory council will need to identify cost projections for each method in the media plan. Cost projections should include material development, presentation fees, postage, telephone, travel, and staff time. Finally, the council should estimate the results from the media plan to include projecting direct inquiries, requests for application, and number of applications submitted for consideration.

Corporate Initiative. Once staff have received training and orientation concerning the program, understand the goals and objectives, and have selected initial projects, they can

develop the marketing plan for approaching businesses. The marketing plan identifies the activities necessary to obtain a commitment from a corporate partner to develop jobs or build awareness, a projected timeline, and responsible parties. Key components of a marketing plan are:

Marketing Plan for a Regional or Statewide Corporate Initiative

1. **Develop a solicitation method. Consider...**

   - referral from satisfied business/office or colleagues,
   - referral through state association of associations,
   - cold call.

2. **Develop a portfolio of professional materials for approaching business/trade associations, conducting an awareness campaign, approaching unions, or public sector employers. Include...**

   - an explanation of supported employment and its benefits,
   - current employer references or placement list,
   - potential duties list for targeted industries/businesses,
   - newspaper or industry publications on supported employment,
   - videotapes on supported employment.

3. **Identify possible strategies for promoting awareness or obtaining commitment to consider supported employment from individual business/offices. Consider...**

   - corporate/association publications,
   - member/store manager information packets,
   - statewide, regional/chapter or departmental presentations,
   - personal call to action for corporate/trade association's staff,
   - direct mail/phone solicitation.

4. **Develop a method for involving local support agencies in the program.**

   - Solicit interest.
   - Identify capabilities.
   - Link with interested businesses.
   - Determine success or assistance needs.

5. **Develop a plan for recognition and feedback to collaborating business/trade associations/unions/public sector hiring sources/support agencies. Use...**

   - board updates,
   - regularly scheduled meetings,
   - certificates of accomplishment,
   - annual awards.

Table 11: Developing a Marketing Plan for a Corporate Initiative

Professionally developed tools such as letterhead, envelopes, binders, business cards, brochures, etc. are essential to communicate a reputable, successful image. Corporations and trade associations wish to have confidence that they are embarking on a successful partnership. Their reputations are at stake when they sponsor an initiative with their members/affiliates. Thus, they need to have confidence that your organization has the stature and capability to successfully collaborate on this venture. The image conveyed by a materials portfolio can affect a corporation's confidence and influence its decision to collaborate with a corporate initiative program.

A variety of strategies can be used to pilot corporate initiative in trade association member businesses, regional or statewide offices of corporations, or departments within corporations. Negotiations with interested partners should focus on developing a combination of mutually agreeable strategies. Marketing efforts also need to be directed to local support agencies. Their effective involvement in the local job development, employee matching, and support process ultimately will determine program success. Thus, local support agencies need to have the capacity to deliver quality services to consumers and the business. Recognition and feedback allow corporate partners to buy into the program and celebrate it's successes and stick with the program when there are failures. Ongoing communication and recognition for efforts can build a strong working relationship.

Summary. With a program marketing plan in place, the marketing activities can be prioritized and adjusted based on the level of response to each activity. This is important, because a program with limited resources can be over-marketed as well as under-marketed. Under-marketing programs can diminish the success of a business development program by not having enough applications or not having strong applications. On the other hand, over-

marketing or having too many applications, particularly if available resources cannot support strong proposals, may diminish future interest and response to the program. Since there is a fine line between too much and too little marketing, a marketing plan allows staff to monitor interest in the program and adjust their strategy accordingly.

Solicit Proposals and Select Projects

Business Development. In business development programming, a competitive application process can insure the on-going success of the program and can increase the probability that program resources will be invested in projects with the highest likelihood of success. Risk is inherent in the business development process. The marketplace is competitive by design. Therefore, a competitive application process may draw applicants that take the process seriously and value the resources offered as well as others who are only interested in the money.

There are several ways to solicit competitive applications. Wisconsin BDI uses an annual or semi-annual application cycle. Another way is to have an on-going application process with a strict scoring criteria and resources that are dispersed at various intervals throughout the year. Resources are committed piece meal, as the project continues to develop. Both solicitation methods have advantages and disadvantages.

Annual or Semi-Annual Application Cycle - An advantage to an annual or semi-annual application cycle is that all applicants can be screened and selected with the highest level of competition and the lowest level of administration. Another advantage is that, after projects are selected, staff can focus on providing direct consultation and client support. The disadvantage is that an application deadline might not be timely for many potential applicants who learn about the program during the months when applications are not being accepted.

On-Going Application Process - The advantage to using an on-going application process is that all applicants are able to submit applications when they learn of the program (Brown, personal communication, 1993). Therefore, services can be provided in a timely manner. A disadvantage is that the program runs the risk of accepting less competitive applications in the first half of the funding year when there are more resources and rejecting more competitive applications at the end of the year due to a lack of resources. Another disadvantage is that more staff administration is needed to handle inquiries, screen, and select projects.

The best way to screen applicants is to provide them with enough information about the evaluation criteria so that they are able to determine if they are appropriate for the program prior to completing the application process. This information is best provided in an application manual. Screening criteria fall into two major categories, proposed business and management capability.

Program staff are encouraged to learn as much as possible about potential applicants before reviewing the applications. If this is not possible, a follow-up interview with at least some applicants is recommended. No applicant's proposed business or management capability will meet all of the screening criteria. The screening criteria which are weak within any given applicant's proposal are not justification for screening out, but rather are the justification for offering the business development programs resources to the applicant. The selection process is done on a comparative, competitive basis. Therefore, applicants with the least amount of weak screening criteria are selected, as they appear more likely to succeed and can make best use of the resources. The following table provides sample screening criteria that have been used by several economic development programs:

Sample Screening Criteria

The proposed business has...

- a well-defined product/service with specific competitive advantage;
- a well-defined market niche;
- access to sufficient capital for reasonable growth in the business;
- good understanding of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to the proposed business venture;
- global view of business including competition and market trends; good location (if retail, restaurant, etc.); and
- available good human resources and a reliable supply of raw materials.

The management capability has...

- a strong commitment to the business, both financial and personal;
- possesses or has access to reasonable levels of management experience/training in sales/marketing, operations and finance/accounting;
- flexibility and tenacity in the face of conflict;
- good financial control and ability to manage cash flow;
- strong family and/or community support;
- integrity and honesty in the marketplace;
- sufficient humility to admit mistakes; and
- reasonable expectations of sales, profits and risk as well as ability to manage/reduce risk as necessary.

from: Wisconsin BDI

Table 12: Sample Screening Criteria

The selection process should include consensus with program staff and the advisory council. Program staff should conduct the initial screening and provide draft recommendations regarding each proposal. The program staff should meet with the advisory council to review the proposals, present staff recommendations, and select the business development initiative proposals to receive funding. The award letter to successful applicants should include the amount of direct consultation hours to be provided by program staff and the amount of a venture development grant which the entrepreneur can use to hire specialized consultation based on the needs and scope of the project.

The denial of resources to other applicants should be viewed as an opportunity to educate a potential entrepreneur. Applicants may be cautioned as to why their proposal was viewed as not feasible and given suggestions on how it may be improved. A service is provided to some who would have started their businesses without having been cautioned through the application process. There can be more hardship from inappropriately starting a business that is not feasible than from being denied initial business development resources. More determined entrepreneurs seem to learn from the process and successfully reapply.

Corporate Initiative. Based on the environmental assessment, strategic plan, and input from the Advisory Council, staff can begin to target potential projects. The results should be a comprehensive list of those corporations, trade associations or awareness vehicles that might be considered. Key steps in the targeting process include the following:

1. Obtain a complete list of trade associations in your state.
2. Obtain a complete list of larger corporations or corporations with regional or statewide offices.
3. Obtain a complete list of business groups or publications across your state through which an awareness campaign might be conducted.

Most states have an association of trade organizations that has a roster of and information on all member trade associations. By joining this association, a regional or statewide effort can become involved and make valuable contacts. This "Super Association" can also guide the corporate initiative program to those business groups that might be more receptive to supported employment or have personnel needs that could be addressed by supported employment. Similarly, most states have directories of manufacturing and other corporations. These directories give valuable information about firms within a state, including size, location, current officers, unions representing workers, products/services provided, annual sales/revenue, and so forth. Identifying business groups is more labor intensive. While certain groups such as Chambers of Commerce, Rotary, and Kiwanis are widespread, many

communities have their own unique business groups. Local agencies might be able to help the coalition target groups across the state.

Armed with a comprehensive list of potential projects, your program should institute a screening process to select those projects with the highest likelihood of success. Information from the environmental assessment, strategic plan, advisory council, interviews with people in other states and consultative interviews with association/corporate leaders and state agencies should help finalize a project list. Factors that might be considered in screening potential corporate/trade association targets include those with:

Factors to Consider When Selecting Projects for the Corporate Initiative Program

Consider projects which have...

- successful placements;
- opportunities that match consumer occupational skills/interests/support needs;
- a collaborative relationship between association/corporate headquarters and members/branches;
- regional or statewide membership;
- sufficient size of workforce (e.g. hospitals versus grain/feed dealers);
- sufficient work scope and volume allow for persons with a wide range of talents to be employed;
- industry growth or stability;
- labor shortages, turnover or reliability problems.

Nietupski, 1992

Table 13: Selecting Projects for the Corporate Initiative

Success within a particular industry or corporation serves to increase employer confidence that a job development partnership is feasible. Factors such as regional or statewide membership, size of workforce at individual locations, work scope and volume, labor problems or shortages, and industry stability enable the initiative to determine if sufficient opportunities exist to justify the time investment. Consumer interest, etc. in particular occupations will affect program success as well.

Program Operation

Business Development. Once entrepreneurial projects have been selected, program staff must coordinate entrepreneurial project needs assessment, contract for business consultation services, business plan design, business planning process, financial packaging, and start-up or expansion plans with each funded project. An entrepreneur needs assessment is an evaluation of specific technical assistance needs of the client in the areas of sales/marketing, operations, and accounting/finance. The entrepreneur could also have specific needs in the areas of legal services, engineering, or industry-specific expertise. The results of the needs assessment will be the identification of specific technical assistance needs.

In some instances, the identified technical assistance needs can be addressed by the business development program staff. In other situations experts from outside the program will be required. Contracting for business consultation services should be based on a proposal which the consultant provides to the entrepreneur and is mutually agreed upon by individuals involved. It can be a good educational process for the entrepreneur to review several consultation proposals before selecting a consultant.

The business development program staff should review each entrepreneur's business plan. The business plan is based on the scope of the project, amount of financing required, the existing management, and business planning capabilities of the potential entrepreneur. A business plan has to have more research and detailed information if the project is larger in scope, requires larger amounts of outside financing, and/or the consumer has limited management and business planning capabilities.

Program staff should review each entrepreneur's planning process. The planning process consists of a marketing plan, operational plan and financial statements. The marketing plan can consist of primary and/or secondary market research, marketing strategies, and sales forecasts with assumptions. The operational plan can consist of production flow chart, job descriptions, location, organizational structure, and management profile(s). The financial

statements can consist of proforma income statements, balance sheets, cash flow statements, and sources and uses statements. Financing for the program is based on available private and public sources, the amount of owner equity available, and the amount of debt which the business can sustain based on the business plan. Projects with a limited likelihood of securing necessary financing are usually screened out at the application phase.

Staff should look at each entrepreneur's start-up or expansion plan. The start-up or expansion plan is based on operational and hiring requirements outlined in the business plan and timeliness of financial resources made available in the financial package. Business development program staff will want to work closely with the entrepreneurs to assure sound start-up or expansion plans are operationalized.

Business Development Initiative Case Study Example. Since 1992, The Tennessee Initiative on Employment (TIE) of The University of Tennessee has been building a coalition to support the Tennessee Business Development Initiative. The Tennessee Initiative on Employment (TIE) has developed a three year program implementation plan. The plan is broken down by quarters in year one and annual plans for years two and three as explained in the following table.

Tennessee Business Development Initiative Implementation Plan
Year One - First Quarter
1. Form an advisory committee and develop application and screening process to select project participants.
2. Select and screen 10 participants utilizing advisory committee recommendations.
3. Develop and package technical assistance materials.
4. Commit technical assistance staff time to selected applicants up to 100 hours for each participant.

Tennessee Business Development Initiative Implementation Plan
(continued)

Year One - Second Quarter

1. Begin technical assistance with 5 agencies.
2. Assess each participant's capacity for conducting a business venture, including internal expertise and current level of business development.
3. Determine specific technical assistance needed for each group (one or more of the following):
   A. Feasibility Study - assist participant assess strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for each proposed business venture.
   B. Business Plan - help participant to produce the detailed document necessary to seek business financing.
   C. Custom Financial Package - help participant prepare custom materials for particular financing source.

Year One - Third Quarter

1. Repeat second quarter activities for the remaining participants.
2. Continue assistance with feasibility studies, business plans, and custom packages to second quarter participants.
3. Provide business start-up technical assistance with initial participants.

Year One - Fourth Quarter

1. Complete activities with all groups.
2. Evaluate the project.
3. Prepare an annual report.

Year Two

The project will be conducted with an additional 10 groups on the same schedule as year one. Evaluation and reporting will be completed in the fourth quarter of year two.

Year Three

The project will be conducted with an additional 10 groups on the same schedule as year one and two.

1. Produce a 3 year demonstration project report with goals, objectives, and outcomes, including: jobs created; jobs created for people with disabilities; project dollars expended per job created; revenue generated for agencies and people with disabilities; and total financing through business planning.

2. Assist advisory committee in developing proposals and accessing on-going program funding based on demonstration project outcomes.

Corporate Initiative Case Study Example. Iowa established a statewide corporate initiative program in 1991 through receipt of an OSERS supported employment systems change grant. This project, termed the Iowa Creative Employment Options (Iowa CEO) Corporate Initiative, built an initial coalition of public sector and consumer group collaborators. Gradually, the coalition expanded to include private sector and other representatives.

Iowa CEO Coalition Members:

Consumer/Consumer Organization Coalition Members

. Iowa Protection & Advocacy Services Director (Core Member)

Private Sector Coalition Members

. Iowa Credit Union League Manager (Core Member)
. Business leader with family members with disabilities (Core Member)
. Human Resources Director from large supermarket chain
. Operations manager from IBM

Public Sector Coalition Members

. MH/MR/DD Agency Administrator (Core Member)
. VR Program Manager (Core Member)
. University Affiliated Program SE Project staff (Core Members)
. DD Council Director (Core Member)
. Private University College of Education Dean (Core Member)
. University-affiliated Institute for Social/Economic Development (Core Member)

Table 14: Iowa CEO Coalition Members

Several sources of information were drawn upon when conducting the environmental assessment used to justify the establishment of the Iowa CEO Corporate Initiative. This included: DD Council input; published research on the status of supported employment in Iowa; direct contact with consumers, their families and support agencies through previously conducted school-to-supported employment transition projects; Job Service publications on employment trends; and information gained from a recently established Supported Employment Management Information System (SEMIS) (see Table 15).

Iowa CEO Environmental Assessment

Consumer/Consumer Organization Assessment

- SEMIS/VR/DD Council databases showed relatively few adults with disabilities in community jobs.
- Contacts with families indicated growing desire for community jobs, especially among graduating special education students.
- Agency contacts & SEMIS data showed relatively few job opportunities outside food service and custodial/housekeeping areas.
- Graduating students had acquired job skills to contribute to the workplace through their special education programs.

Private Sector Assessment

- There were successful examples of corporate initiative in neighboring states.
- Past and Current UAP SE projects had developed successful placements in larger, recognized firms.
- Several firms with trade association contacts had successfully hired supported employees.
- Statistics indicated a declining teenage workforce creating need for alternative labor sources.

Public Sector Assessment

- School programs focused on functional skill for students with disabilities which enhanced consumer work skills across Iowa.
- Support agencies expressed desire for assistance in developing jobs in larger businesses.
- MH support agencies in particular expressed interest in nontraditional "white collar" jobs for persons with mental illness.
- DD Council and state MH/MR/DD agencies encouraged providers and funders to convert from sheltered to integrated "contemporary" services.
- VR agency was interested in a resource to assist them in successfully rehabilitating consumers through supported employment.
- UAP was interested in expanding its SE focus beyond local demonstrations to statewide impact.
- UAP was interested in additional resources to fulfill its mission of training, technical assistance, provision of service and dissemination.
- DD Council was interested in systems change toward integrated community services.
- DD Council survey showed increasing number of agencies offering supported employment.
- Coalition member contacts with agencies suggested the availability of pockets of quality SE service provisions.

Table 15: Iowa CEO Environmental Assessment

In its first year of operation, Iowa CEO's Corporate Initiative targeted two trade

associations (Iowa Credit Union League; Iowa Bankers Association). In year two (1992-93), two additional trade associations were added (Iowa Grocers Association; Iowa Hospital Association) and two corporations, Hy-Vee Food Stores, Inc. and Wal*Mart were approached. The following table describes the portfolio developed by Iowa CEO staff to solicit trade association/corporate involvement. The approach used to gain Iowa Credit Union League collaboration is presented.

Iowa CEO Implementation Example

1. **M... rials developed for credit unions**
   - Descriptive piece
   - Credit Union duties for supported employees
   - "Steps for Getting Started" piece
   - Common employer questions and responses
   - Credit union supported employee brochure
   - Sample hiring proposal
2. **Survey process conducted at League offices.**
   - Jobs carved and supported employment initiated at League on pilot basis.
3. **League Newsletter article on supported employment published** based on successful pilot.
4. **10 credit unions targeted for initial participation** (based on success at League).
   - Invited to presentation
   - Called to action by ICUL staff
5. **Iowa CEO linked local agencies with seven interested credit unions.**
6. **Iowa CEO trained provider agencies on working with its corporate partners.**
7. **Local agencies conducted employer survey, developed and presented hiring proposal; consumers placed, and supported.**
8. **Presentation completed at annual League conference to solicit second round of participants.**
9. **Based on success in pilot sites, second round of possible participants invited to League - sponsored presentation.**

Table 16: Iowa CEO Implementation Example

Evaluation Plan

An evaluation plan allows you to determine program effectiveness, successful strategies, and strategies that need to be modified or abandoned. Program resources will dictate the extent of the evaluation plan. Certainly jobs created, jobs created for people with disabilities, number of projects receiving resources and financing leveraged are critical indices. If a formal evaluation is not possible, an annual business plan which attempts to track critical indices is recommended. Long-term program viability depends upon such outcome data. There are a variety of evaluation measures that might be considered.

Evaluation Measures

√ Number of jobs created
√ Number of jobs created for people with disabilities
√ Income earned by people with disabilities both as business owners and employees
√ Income earned by rehabilitation agencies
√ Amount of financing leveraged through program resources
√ Amount of program dollars/jobs created
√ Number of program inquiries, submitted applications and projects receiving program resources each year
√ Type of jobs created for people with disabilities
√ Number of business plans completed
√ Total revenue generated by program projects
√ Survey of business knowledge and skills acquired by people with disabilities and rehabilitation agency staff

Table 17: Potential Evaluation Measures

Case Example. When Pennsylvania's New Hire Program, which is operated by the Corporation for Owner-Operator Projects (CO-OP), was still a demonstration project, a program evaluation was conducted by the University of Pittsburgh. The Joseph Katz Graduate School of Business at the University of Pittsburgh evaluation plan components are

listed in the following table. The results of the evaluation were positive and were the impetus to further expand/fund the program.

Pennsylvania's New Hire Program Evaluation Plan Components

What is the Program Impact on business firms?

1. Productivity
2. Quality of Goods and Services
3. Profitability
4. Investment in Additional Equipment
5. Sales
6. Costs
7. Employee Training Costs
8. Investment in Facilities
9. Other Impacts

What is the suitability of workers and training assistance?

1. Need for Special Consideration for OVR Workers
2. Use of Government Funded Training Programs
3. Tax Credit Benefits

What is the program's impact on workers and the community?

1. Employment Opportunities for Disabled Workers without Program
2. Employment of Non-OVR Workers
3. Employment of OVR Workers
4. Business Development

Table 18: Pennsylvania's New Hire Program Evaluation Components

Summary

The purpose of this publication is to assist the reader in establishing state/regional business development or corporate initiatives. These two economic development strategies hold tremendous potential for increasing employment opportunities for people with disabilities. The material presented here was drawn from the experience of the authors and

editorial contributors. Share this document with one or more key collaborators in your area. The challenge to the reader is to use this guide to build a coalition of stakeholders in your state or locality. Use this material to engage your coalition members in the assessment of your locality, development of a strategic plan and implementation of your economic development initiatives. Jobs and economic development are essential for the continued prosperity of the citizens of our nation. People with disabilities must be included in the mainstream of economic development. The reader of this material is in a position to build a strong coalition. The next step is yours!

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